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THE WORKS OF

DANIEL DEFOE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

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THE WORKS OF DANIEL DEFOE

VOLUME SEVEN

THE

FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES

OF THE FAMOUS

MOLL FLANDERS

COMPLETE IN TWO PARTS

PART I.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

MOLL FLANDERS, published in January, 1722, makes a claim, like so many of Defoe's narratives, to a manuscript source. There is no pretence, however, that the manuscript is reproduced exactly. "The original of this story is put into new words," wrote Defoe in his preface, "and the style of the famous lady we here speak of is a little altered. . . ." It has generally been understood that this statement of our author was only a fiction to make his book sell; the opinion has never prevailed widely, as in the case of the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, that this work was from another hand than Defoe's. True, some of the more ignorant eighteenth-century readers were imposed upon, as Defoe hoped they would be, and Moll Flanders has been accepted by a few people as a real person. A chap-book [1] published in Dublin in 1730, which pretended to supplement Defoe's information about her, her "governess," and her Lancashire husband, stated that she and her husband settled finally in Galway, where she died in April, 1723, seventy-four years old. It is largely

[1] *Fortune's Fickle Distribution: In Three Parts. Containing, First, The Life and Death of Moll Flanders. Secondly, The Life of Jane Hackabout, her Governess. Thirdly, The Life of James MacFaul, Moll Flanders' Lancashire Husband.*

this later explicit information that led to a belief in the actuality of Moll Flanders. But it is evident that if the heroine of the Dublin chap-book ever lived on this earth, she was not the same as the heroine of Defoe's story. The Irish Moll died at the age of seventy-four in the year 1723; Defoe's heroine, supposedly writing her biography in 1683, declares that she is "almost seventy years of age." It is evident that she and the lady who forty years later was only seventy-four are not one and the same person.

The fact that Moll Flanders of the Dublin chap-book, even if a real woman, could not be the Moll Flanders of Defoe, does not prove conclusively that the latter never existed. We know that in many cases Defoe wrote and had published histories of real criminals; and it is possible that the life of some such person gave him the hint for *Moll Flanders*, as the life of the pirate, Avery, gave him the hint for *Captain Singleton*. If such is the truth, and if the original of Moll Flanders is ever identified, it may turn out that she was the Mary Flanders who was said in the chap-book to be the mother of the Dublin heroine. Granted that each may have been taken from reality, the ages of the two women do not forbid such a supposition. Neither does the fact that, in the last pages of Defoe's book, Moll seems to have only one child alive, her Virginian son; for Defoe, though perhaps giving to his heroine a nickname which she actually bore, may have altered at will the facts of her life. And so, without feeling

obliged for a moment to suppose that Defoe's *Moll Flanders* was based on any manuscript but his own, we may, if we choose, suppose the story to have been suggested by the life of some real woman.

The title in full of this book was, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, &c., who was born in Newgate, and during a Life of continued Variety, for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Years a Whore, Five Times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother,) Twelve Years a Thief, Eight Years a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and died a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums.* The first edition, as I have said, appeared in January, 1722. A second followed in July of the same year; a third, in December; and a fourth, in July, 1723.

Moll Flanders is the one of Defoe's criminal narratives which is of the greatest interest to-day. It has all the circumstantial vividness which we expect in a story of Defoe's, with the difference that the circumstantiality here almost never becomes tedious, as it too often does in our author's other works.[1] It interests us in the account of Moll's meeting her son

[1] As is sometimes the case, Defoe here is once or twice inaccurate in matters of fact. His geographical knowledge, as a rule remarkably good, is a little at fault when he places Westmoreland County in Virginia "full a hundred miles up Potomac River," which, by the way, is "frequently so broad, that when we were in the middle we could not see land on either side for many leagues together." His history, too, was at fault when he made Moll Flanders consider moving to Pennsylvania before the grant to William Penn was made which brought that colony into existence.

in Virginia no less than in the accounts of her thieving, or of her efforts, in her alleged widowhood, to capture some well-to-do man for a husband. And the horrid sombreness of Newgate could not be more vividly presented than it is in the jail scenes. We see its hellish revelry when the crowd of prisoners flout Moll on her arrival, wishing her joy that she is among them and drinking to her with the brandy which they put up to her score, till mocking and blaspheming they reel or caper away, the last of them singing "as she goes, the following piece of Newgate wit: —

> 'If I swing by the string,
> I shall hear the bell ring,
> And then there 's an end of poor Jenny.'"

The gloomy sadness of Newgate we see, on the other hand, on the day when some of the criminals are to be executed. "The next morning there was a sad scene indeed in the prison. The first thing I was saluted with in the morning was the tolling of the great bell at St. Sepulchre's, which ushered in the day. As soon as it began to toll, a dismal groaning and crying was heard from the condemned hole, where there lay six poor souls, who were to be executed that day, some for one crime, some for another, and two for murder."

But it is not only circumstantial vividness which makes *Moll Flanders* interesting to-day. Its heroine comes nearer having the life and individuality of the people created by our great novelists than any other person of Defoe's invention, with the

possible exception of Roxana. In delineating Moll, Defoe shows both more psychological interest than usual and more imagination. As we follow her changing fortunes, we feel that here is a fairly careful study of the character of a woman whose viciousness is caused largely by chance. In her early womanhood Moll is in a position so much like that of Richardson's Pamela that one is almost inclined to conjecture whether *Moll Flanders* had any influence on the first work of our first great novelist. Moll is a dependent in a family far above her socially, whose eldest son makes love to her; but, unlike Pamela, she has no parents to give her prudent advice; nor has she the precociously shrewd, calculating virtue of Pamela, which enables the latter to force her would-be seducer into marriage. The result is that poor Moll, worked upon by love and vanity, is ruined. Deserted now by the man she loves, she enters on a career of deceit and vice — vice that steadily becomes more and more a part of her life — every step of which Defoe traces with logical care. Yet with all her vice, Moll never gets quite beyond our sympathy. We never quite forget that the instinct for self-preservation first drives Moll to her amours, and, when she grows older, to her thieving; though in both, it must be said, the excitement of the dangerous game she is playing leads her to keep on longer than she actually need. It is only to be expected that living thus by her wits, dependent altogether on herself, Moll should become extremely selfish. And yet, even in

her old age, the woman is not without a power of loving, which under favourable circumstances would have made her a good wife, a devoted mother, and withal an esteemed member of good provincial society. At times her love takes on an intensity which is romantic, as when in Virginia she kisses the ground where her newly-discovered son just stood, to whom she has not yet revealed herself. And there is romantic intensity in her love again, when her Lancashire husband leaves her — the only one of her five husbands whom she really loved — and she sits the whole day in her room grieving silently, or calling out, "O Jemmy! . . . come back, come back."

But though capable of such outbursts of passion, Moll Flanders is for the most part level-headed and unemotional in a cold-blooded way, characteristic of the people in Defoe's stories. In spite of her love for her Lancashire husband, she never tells him more of her history than it is prudent to divulge. And when she gives her newly-discovered son a gold watch, saying, "I had nothing of any value to bestow but that, and I desired he would now and then kiss it for my sake," there follows that admirable realistic touch: — "I did not, indeed, tell him that I stole it from a gentlewoman's side, at a meeting-house in London. That 's by the way."

In fine, Moll Flanders, with the mixture of good and evil in her nature, is as vital a character as Defoe ever created. Had he surrounded her with characters equally vivified, he would have anticipated Fielding in producing the English novel of real life.

One living character, however, does not make a novel any more than one swallow makes a summer; and so, after all, *Moll Flanders*, like Defoe's other narratives, is, properly speaking, only a "realistic biography." It is notable among his other "realistic biographies," however, in showing imagination, sympathetic insight into character, and creative ability, which are unfortunately rare in Defoe's fiction.

Following *Moll Flanders*, will be found *An Appeal to Honour and Justice, tho' it be of his Worst Enemies, by Daniel Defoe. Being a True Account of his Conduct in Publick Affairs.* This was a pamphlet published in January, 1715, but written in the preceding November. Defoe composed it as a vindication of his conduct, at a time when his temporising policy had left him few friends in either political party. The Whigs suspected, if they did not actually know, that close and none too honourable association of Defoe and Harley which has been established beyond doubt, only by a recent publication of the Historical Manuscripts Commission.[1] Many of them, for reasons partly personal and partly political, chose to misunderstand the obvious irony of two or three pamphlets[2] published

[1] *Cf. Defoe and Harley, English Historical Review*, xv. p. 238; and *Daniel Defoe in Scotland, Scottish Review*, xxxvi. p. 250.

[2] The two most important were: — *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover*, February, 1713; and *And What if the Pretender should Come?* March, 1713.

by Defoe towards the end of Anne's reign. He was accordingly indicted "for high crimes and misdemeanors," but promptly pardoned by the Queen. Since the royal policy at the time was directed by Tory leaders, the pardon could not have lessened the animosity of his Whig enemies. Neither was Defoe liked by the Tories, who could not but remember him as the champion of the Dissenters; and he did not decrease their dislike, when he took pains to parade his Whiggism on the accession of George I. Even so, he could regain the confidence of comparatively few Hanoverians. Thus, at the end of 1714, Defoe, mistrusted by both political parties, found himself obliged to write his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, if he wished once more to command the respect of his old political friends.

The contents of the pamphlet are not exactly what the title would lead us to expect. It was not so much a "true account" of Defoe's conduct in public affairs, as an account of what he would have liked his conduct to be. He gives no hint of the fact that for years, whether in Harley's service or Godolphin's, he was nothing but a political spy. In fairness to Defoe, it should be said that, whatever the secret ambitions of the ministers during these years, the policy of the government in the main was wise, and that Defoe — sincerely, it would seem — believed in it. It is only his underhand method of helping to carry out this policy that we condemn. Had Defoe, in all honour and openness, manifested his devotion to liberty, and his love of

moderation in both government and religion, which he declares in his *Appeal*, we should feel nothing but admiration for the man.

Apart from its historical interest, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* is interesting in point of style. More carefully composed, on the whole, than Defoe's narratives, when it comes to the relation of his dealings with Harley, it falls into the less careful and more verbose manner of his stories. It is worth while to observe in this narrative of fact that the Lord Treasurer, Godolphin, shows his affability in the same manner as the characters of Defoe's fiction. When he first saw Defoe after Harley's dismissal, he "received me with great freedom, and told me, *smiling*,[1] he had not seen me a long while."

G. H. Maynadier.

[1] The italics are my own. Defoe's characters, as I have shown, seldom display their good-will except by smiling.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE world is so taken up of late with novels and romances, that it will be hard for a private history to be taken for genuine, where the names and other circumstances of the person are concealed; and on this account we must be content to leave the reader to pass his own opinion upon the ensuing sheets, and take it just as he pleases.

The author is here supposed to be writing her own history, and in the very beginning of her account she gives the reasons why she thinks fit to conceal her true name, after which there is no occasion to say any more about that.

It is true that the original of this story is put into new words, and the style of the famous lady we here speak of is a little altered; particularly she is made to tell her own tale in modester words than she told it at first, the copy which came first to hand having been written in language more like one still in Newgate than one grown penitent and humble, as she afterwards pretends to be.

The pen employed in finishing her story, and making it what you now see it to be, has had no little difficulty to put it into a dress fit to be seen, and to make it speak language fit to be read. When

a woman debauched from her youth, nay, even being the offspring of debauchery and vice, comes to give an account of all her vicious practices, and even to descend to the particular occasions and circumstances by which she first became wicked, and of all the progressions of crime which she ran through in threescore years, an author must be hard put to it to wrap it up so clean as not to give room, especially for vicious readers, to turn it to his disadvantage.

All possible care, however, has been taken to give no lewd ideas, no immodest turns in the new dressing up this story; no, not to the worst part of her expressions. To this purpose some of the vicious part of her life, which could not be modestly told, is quite left out, and several other parts are very much shortened. What is left 't is hoped will not offend the chastest reader or the modestest hearer; and as the best use is to be made even of the worst story, the moral, 't is hoped, will keep the reader serious, even where the story might incline him to be otherwise. To give the history of a wicked life repented of, necessarily requires that the wicked part should be made as wicked as the real history of it will bear, to illustrate and give a beauty to the penitent part, which is certainly the best and brightest, if related with equal spirit and life.

It is suggested there cannot be the same life, the same brightness and beauty, in relating the penitent part as is in the criminal part. If there is any truth in that suggestion, I must be allowed to say, 't is because there is not the same taste and relish in the reading; and indeed it is too true that the differ-

ence lies not in the real worth of the subject so much as in the gust and palate of the reader.

But as this work is chiefly recommended to those who know how to read it, and how to make the good uses of it which the story all along recommends to them, so it is to be hoped that such readers will be much more pleased with the moral than the fable, with the application than with the relation, and with the end of the writer than with the life of the person written of.

There is in this story abundance of delightful incidents, and all of them usefully applied. There is an agreeable turn artfully given them in the relating, that naturally instructs the reader, either one way or another. The first part of her lewd life with the young gentleman at Colchester has so many happy turns given it to expose the crime, and warn all whose circumstances are adapted to it, of the ruinous end of such things, and the foolish, thoughtless, and abhorred conduct of both the parties, that it abundantly atones for all the lively description she gives of her folly and wickedness.

The repentance of her lover at Bath, and how brought by the just alarm of his fit of sickness to abandon her; the just caution given there against even the lawful intimacies of the dearest friends, and how unable they are to preserve the most solemn resolutions of virtue without divine assistance; these are parts which, to a just discernment, will appear to have more real beauty in them than all the amorous chain of story which introduces it.

In a word, as the whole relation is carefully garbled

of all the levity and looseness that was in it, so it is applied, and with the utmost care, to virtuous and religious uses. None can, without being guilty of manifest injustice, cast any reproach upon it, or upon our design in publishing it.

The advocates for the stage have, in all ages, made this the great argument to persuade people that their plays are useful, and that they ought to be allowed in the most civilised and in the most religious government; namely, that they are applied to virtuous purposes, and that, by the most lively representations, they fail not to recommend virtue and generous principles, and to discourage and expose all sorts of vice and corruption of manners; and were it true that they did so, and that they constantly adhered to that rule, as the test of their acting on the theatre, much might be said in their favour.

Throughout the infinite variety of this book, this fundamental is most strictly adhered to; there is not a wicked action in any part of it, but is first or last rendered unhappy and unfortunate; there is not a superlative villain brought upon the stage, but either he is brought to an unhappy end, or brought to be a penitent; there is not an ill thing mentioned but it is condemned, even in the relation, nor a virtuous, just thing but it carries its praise along with it. What can more exactly answer the rule laid down, to recommend even those representations of things which have so many other just objections lying against them? namely, of example of bad company, obscene language, and the like.

Upon this foundation this book is recommended to

the reader, as a work from every part of which something may be learned, and some just and religious inference is drawn, by which the reader will have something of instruction if he pleases to make use of it.

All the exploits of this lady of fame, in her depredations upon mankind, stand as so many warnings to honest people to beware of them, intimating to them by what methods innocent people are drawn in, plundered, and robbed, and by consequence how to avoid them. Her robbing a little child, dressed fine by the vanity of the mother, to go to the dancing-school, is a good memento to such people hereafter, as is likewise her picking the gold watch from the young lady's side in the park.

Her getting a parcel from a hare-brained wench at the coaches in St. John's Street; her booty at the fire, and also at Harwich, all give us excellent warning in such cases to be more present to ourselves in sudden surprises of every sort.

Her application to a sober life and industrious management at last, in Virginia, with her transported spouse, is a story fruitful of instruction to all the unfortunate creatures who are obliged to seek their re-establishment abroad, whether by the misery of transportation or other disaster; letting them know that diligence and application have their due encouragement, even in the remotest part of the world, and that no case can be so low, so despicable, or so empty of prospect, but that an unwearied industry will go a great way to deliver us from it, will in time raise the meanest creature to appear

again in the world, and give him a new cast for his life.

These are a few of the serious inferences which we are led by the hand to in this book, and these are fully sufficient to justify any man in recommending it to the world, and much more to justify the publication of it.

There are two of the most beautiful parts still behind, which this story gives some idea of, and lets us into the parts of them, but they are either of them too long to be brought into the same volume, and indeed are, as I may call them, whole volumes of themselves, viz.: 1. The life of her governess, as she calls her, who had run through, it seems, in a few years, all the eminent degrees of a gentlewoman, a whore, and a bawd; a midwife and a midwife-keeper, as they are called; a pawnbroker, a child-taker, a receiver of thieves, and of stolen goods; and, in a word, herself a thief, a breeder up of thieves, and the like, and yet at last a penitent.

The second is the life of her transported husband, a highwayman, who, it seems, lived a twelve years' life of successful villainy upon the road, and even at last came off so well as to be a volunteer transport, not a convict; and in whose life there is an incredible variety.

But, as I said, these are things too long to bring in here, so neither can I make a promise of their coming out by themselves.

We cannot say, indeed, that this history is carried on quite to the end of the life of this famous Moll Flanders, for nobody can write their own life to the

full end of it, unless they can write it after they are dead. But her husband's life, being written by a third hand, gives a full account of them both, how long they lived together in that country, and how they came both to England again, after about eight years, in which time they were grown very rich, and where she lived, it seems, to be very old, but was not so extraordinary a penitent as she was at first; it seems only that indeed she always spoke with abhorrence of her former life, and of every part of it.

In her last scene, at Maryland and Virginia, many pleasant things happened, which makes that part of her life very agreeable, but they are not told with the same elegancy as those accounted for by herself; so it is still to the more advantage that we break off here.

The FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES OF THE FAMOUS MOLL FLANDERS

MY true name is so well known in the records or registers at Newgate, and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work; perhaps after my death it may be better known; at present it would not be proper, no, not though a general pardon should be issued, even without exceptions of persons or crimes.

It is enough to tell you, that as some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm (having gone out of the world by the steps and the string, as I often expected to go), knew me by the name of Moll Flanders, so you may give me leave to go under that name till I dare own who I have been, as well as who I am.

I have been told, that in one of our neighbour nations, whether it be in France or where else I

know not, they have an order from the king, that when any criminal is condemned, either to die, or to the galleys, or to be transported, if they leave any children, as such are generally unprovided for, by the forfeiture of their parents, so they are immediately taken into the care of the government, and put into an hospital called the House of Orphans, where they are bred up, clothed, fed, taught, and when fit to go out, are placed to trades, or to services, so as to be well able to provide for themselves by an honest, industrious behaviour.

Had this been the custom in our country, I had not been left a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper, as was my fate; and by which, I was not only exposed to very great distresses, even before I was capable either of understanding my case or how to amend it, but brought into a course of life, scandalous in itself, and which in its ordinary course tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body.

But the case was otherwise here. My mother was convicted of felony for a petty theft, scarce worth naming, viz., borrowing three pieces of fine holland of a certain draper in Cheapside. The circumstances are too long to repeat, and I have heard them related so many ways, that I can scarce tell which is the right account.

However it was, they all agree in this, that my

mother pleaded her belly, and being found quick with child, she was respited for about seven months; after which she was called down, as they term it, to her former judgment, but obtained the favour afterward of being transported to the plantations, and left me about half a year old, and in bad hands you may be sure.

This is too near the first hours of my life for me to relate anything of myself but by hearsay; 't is enough to mention, that as I was born in such an unhappy place, I had no parish to have recourse to for my nourishment in my infancy; nor can I give the least account how I was kept alive, other than that, as I have been told, some relation of my mother took me away, but at whose expense, or by whose direction, I know nothing at all of it.

The first account that I can recollect, or could ever learn, of myself, was that I had wandered among a crew of those people they call gipsies, or Egyptians; but I believe it was but a little while that I had been among them, for I had not had my skin discoloured, as they do to all children they carry about with them; nor can I tell how I came among them, or how I got from them.

It was at Colchester, in Essex, that those people left me, and I have a notion in my head that I left them there (that is, that I hid myself and would not go any farther with them), but I am not able to be

particular in that account; only this I remember, that being taken up by some of the parish officers of Colchester, I gave an account that I came into the town with the gipsies, but that I would not go any farther with them, and that so they had left me, but whither they were gone that I knew not; for though they sent round the country to inquire after them, it seems they could not be found.

I was now in a way to be provided for; for though I was not a parish charge upon this or that part of the town by law, yet as my case came to be known, and that I was too young to do any work, being not above three years old, compassion moved the magistrates of the town to take care of me, and I became one of their own as much as if I had been born in the place.

In the provision they made for me, it was my good hap to be put to nurse, as they call it, to a woman who was indeed poor, but had been in better circumstances, and who got a little livelihood by taking such as I was supposed to be, and keeping them with all necessaries, till they were at a certain age, in which it might be supposed they might go to service, or get their own bread.

This woman had also a little school, which she kept to teach children to read and to work; and having, I say, lived before that in good fashion, she bred up the children with a great deal of art, as well as with a great deal of care.

But, which was worth all the rest, she bred them up very religiously also, being herself a very sober, pious woman; secondly, very housewifely and clean; and, thirdly, very mannerly, and with good behaviour. So that, excepting a plain diet, coarse lodging, and mean clothes, we were brought up as mannerly as if we had been at the dancing-school.

I was continued here till I was eight years old, when I was terrified with news that the magistrates (as I think they called them) had ordered that I should go to service. I was able to do but very little, wherever I was to go, except it was to run of errands, and be a drudge to some cookmaid, and this they told me often, which put me into a great fright; for I had a thorough aversion to going to service, as they called it, though I was so young; and I told my nurse, that I believed I could get my living without going to service, if she pleased to let me; for she had taught me to work with my needle, and spin worsted, which is the chief trade of that city, and I told her that if she would keep me, I would work for her, and I would work very hard.

I talked to her almost every day of working hard; and, in short, I did nothing but work and cry all day, which grieved the good, kind woman so much, that at last she began to be concerned for me, for she loved me very well.

One day after this, as she came into the room,

where all the poor children were at work, she sat down just over against me, not in her usual place as mistress, but as if she had set herself on purpose to observe me and see me work. I was doing something she had set me to, as I remember it was marking some shirts, which she had taken to make, and after a while she began to talk to me. "Thou foolish child," says she, "thou art always crying" (for I was crying then). "Prithee, what dost cry for?" "Because they will take me away," says I, "and put me to service, and I can't work house-work." "Well, child," says she, "but though you can't work house-work, you will learn it in time, and they won't put you to hard things at first." "Yes, they will," says I; "and if I can't do it they will beat me, and the maids will beat me to make me do great work, and I am but a little girl, and I can't do it;" and then I cried again, till I could not speak any more.

This moved my good motherly nurse, so that she resolved I should not go to service yet; so she bid me not cry, and she would speak to Mr. Mayor, and I should not go to service till I was bigger.

Well, this did not satisfy me, for to think of going to service at all was such a frightful thing to me, that if she had assured me I should not have gone till I was twenty years old, it would have been the same to me; I should have cried all the time, with

the very apprehension of its being to be so at last.

When she saw that I was not pacified yet, she began to be angry with me. "And what would you have?" says she. "Don't I tell you that you shall not go to service till you are bigger?" "Ay," says I, "but then I must go at last." "Why, what," said she, "is the girl mad? What! would you be a gentlewoman?" "Yes," says I, and cried heartily till I roared out again.

This set the old gentlewoman a-laughing at me, as you may be sure it would. "Well, madam, forsooth," says she, gibing at me, "you would be a gentlewoman; and how will you come to be a gentlewoman? What! will you do it by your fingers' ends?"

"Yes," says I again, very innocently.

"Why, what can you earn," says she; "what can you get a day at your work?"

"Threepence," said I, "when I spin, and fourpence when I work plain work."

"Alas! poor gentlewoman," said she again, laughing, "what will that do for thee?"

"It will keep me," says I, "if you will let me live with you;" and this I said in such a poor petitioning tone, that it made the poor woman's heart yearn to me, as she told me afterwards.

"But," says she, "that will not keep you and buy

you clothes too; and who must buy the little gentlewoman clothes?" says she, and smiled all the while at me.

"I will work harder then," says I, "and you shall have it all."

"Poor child! it won't keep you," said she; "it will hardly find you in victuals."

"Then I would have no victuals," says I again, very innocently; "let me but live with you."

"Why, can you live without victuals?" says she. "Yes," again says I, very much like a child, you may be sure, and still I cried heartily.

I had no policy in all this; you may easily see it was all nature: but it was joined with so much innocence and so much passion that, in short, it set the good motherly creature a-weeping too, and at last she cried as fast as I did, and then took me and led me out of the teaching-room. "Come," says she, "you shan't go to service; you shall live with me;" and this pacified me for the present.

After this, she going to wait on the Mayor, my story came up, and my good nurse told Mr. Mayor the whole tale: he was so pleased with it, that he would call his lady and his two daughters to hear it, and it made mirth enough among them, you may be sure.

However, not a week had passed over, but on a sudden comes Mrs. Mayoress and her two daughters to the house to see my old nurse, and to see her

school and the children. When they had looked about them a little, "Well, Mrs. ——," says the Mayoress to my nurse, "and pray which is the little lass that is to be a gentlewoman?" I heard her, and I was terribly frighted, though I did not know why neither; but Mrs. Mayoress comes up to me, "Well, miss," says she, "and what are you at work upon?" The word miss was a language that had hardly been heard of in our school, and I wondered what sad name it was she called me; however, I stood up, made a curtsey, and she took my work out of my hand, looked on it, and said it was very well; then she looked upon one of my hands. "Nay, she may come to be a gentlewoman," says she, "for aught I know; she has a lady's hand, I assure you." This pleased me mightily; but Mrs. Mayoress did not stop there, but put her hand in her pocket, gave me a shilling, and bid me mind my work, and learn to work well, and I might be a gentlewoman for aught she knew.

All this while my good old nurse, Mrs. Mayoress, and all the rest of them, did not understand me at all, for they meant one sort of thing by the word gentlewoman, and I meant quite another; for, alas! all I understood by being a gentlewoman, was to be able to work for myself, and get enough to keep me without going to service, whereas they meant to live great and high, and I know not what.

Well, after Mrs. Mayoress was gone, her two daughters came in, and they called for the gentlewoman too, and they talked a long while to me, and I answered them in my innocent way; but always, if they asked me whether I resolved to be a gentlewoman, I answered, Yes. At last they asked me what a gentlewoman was? That puzzled me much. However, I explained myself negatively, that it was one that did not go to service, to do house-work; they were mightily pleased, and liked my little prattle to them, which, it seems, was agreeable enough to them, and they gave me money too.

As for my money, I gave it all to my mistress-nurse, as I called her, and told her she should have all I got when I was a gentlewoman as well as now. By this and some other of my talk, my old tutoress began to understand what I meant by being a gentlewoman, and that it was no more than to be able to get my bread by my own work; and at last she asked me whether it was not so.

I told her, yes, and insisted on it, that to do so was to be a gentlewoman; "for," says I, "there is such a one," naming a woman that mended lace and washed the ladies' laced heads; "she," says I, "is a gentlewoman, and they call her madam."

"Poor child," says my good old nurse, "you may soon be such a gentlewoman as that, for she is a person of ill fame, and has had two bastards."

I did not understand anything of that ; but I answered, " I am sure they call her madam, and she does not go to service nor do house-work ; " and therefore I insisted that she was a gentlewoman, and I would be such a gentlewoman as that.

The ladies were told all this again, and they made themselves merry with it, and every now and then Mr. Mayor's daughters would come and see me, and ask where the little gentlewoman was, which made me not a little proud of myself besides. I was often visited by these young ladies, and sometimes they brought others with them ; so that I was known by it almost all over the town.

I was now about ten years old, and began to look a little womanish, for I was mighty grave, very mannerly, and as I had often heard the ladie say I was pretty, and would be very handsome, you may be sure it made me not a little proud. However, that pride had no ill effect upon me yet ; only, as they often gave me money, and I gave it my old nurse, she, honest woman, was so just as to lay it out again for me, and gave me head-dresses, and linen, and gloves, and I went very neat, for if I had rags on, I would always be clean, or else I would dabble them in water myself ; but, I say, my good nurse, when I had money given me, very honestly laid it out for me, and would always tell the ladies this or that was bought with their money ; and

this made them give me more, till at last I was indeed called upon by the magistrates to go out to service. But then I was become so good a workwoman myself, and the ladies were so kind to me, that I was past it; for I could earn as much for my nurse as was enough to keep me; so she told them, that if they would give her leave, she would keep the gentlewoman, as she called me, to be her assistant, and teach the children, which I was very well able to do; for I was very nimble at my work, though I was yet very young.

But the kindness of the ladies did not end here, for when they understood that I was no more maintained by the town as before, they gave me money oftener; and as I grew up, they brought me work to do for them, such as linen to make, laces to mend, and heads to dress up, and not only paid me for doing them, but even taught me how to do them; so that I was a gentlewoman indeed, as I understood that word; for before I was twelve years old, I not only found myself clothes, and paid my nurse for my keeping, but got money in my pocket too.

The ladies also gave me clothes frequently of their own or their children's; some stockings, some petticoats, some gowns, some one thing, some another; and these my old woman managed for me like a mother, and kept them for me, obliged me to

mend them, and turn them to the best advantage, for she was a rare housewife.

At last one of the ladies took such a fancy to me that she would have me home to her house, for a month, she said, to be among her daughters.

Now, though this was exceeding kind in her, yet, as my good woman said to her, unless she resolved to keep me for good and all, she would do the little gentlewoman more harm than good. "Well," says the lady, "that's true; I'll only take her home for a week, then, that I may see how my daughters and she agree, and how I like her temper, and then I'll tell you more; and in the meantime, if anybody comes to see her as they used to do, you may only tell them you have sent her out to my house."

This was prudently managed enough, and I went to the lady's house; but I was so pleased there with the young ladies, and they so pleased with me, that I had enough to do to come away, and they were as unwilling to part with me.

However, I did come away, and lived almost a year more with my honest old woman, and began now to be very helpful to her; for I was almost fourteen years old, was tall of my age, and looked a little womanish; but I had such a taste of genteel living at the lady's house that I was not so easy in my old quarters as I used to be, and I thought it

was fine to be a gentlewoman indeed, for I had quite other notions of a gentlewoman now than I had before; and as I thought that it was fine to be a gentlewoman, so I loved to be among gentlewomen, and therefore I longed to be there again.

When I was about fourteen years and a quarter old, my good old nurse, mother I ought to call her, fell sick and died. I was then in a sad condition indeed, for as there is no great bustle in putting an end to a poor body's family when once they are carried to the grave, so the poor good woman being buried, the parish children were immediately removed by the church-wardens; the school was at an end, and the day children of it had no more to do but just stay at home till they were sent somewhere else. As for what she left, a daughter, a married woman, came and swept it all away, and removing the goods, they had no more to say to me than to jest with me, and tell me that the little gentlewoman might set up for herself if she pleased.

I was frighted out of my wits almost, and knew not what to do; for I was, as it were, turned out of doors to the wide world, and that which was still worse, the old honest woman had two-and-twenty shillings of mine in her hand, which was all the estate the little gentlewoman had in the world; and when I asked the daughter for it she huffed me, and told me she had nothing to do with it.

It was true the good, poor woman had told her daughter of it, and that it lay in such a place, that it was the child's money, and had called once or twice for me to give it me, but I was unhappily out of the way, and when I came back she was past being in a condition to speak of it. However, the daughter was so honest afterwards as to give it me, though at first she used me cruelly about it.

Now was I a poor gentlewoman indeed, and I was just that very night to be turned into the wide world; for the daughter removed all the goods, and I had not so much as a lodging to go to, or a bit of bread to eat. But it seems some of the neighbours took so much compassion of me as to acquaint the lady in whose family I had been; and immediately she sent her maid to fetch me, and away I went with them bag and baggage, and with a glad heart, you may be sure. The fright of my condition had made such an impression upon me that I did not want now to be a gentlewoman, but was very willing to be a servant, and that any kind of servant they thought fit to have me be.

But my new generous mistress had better thoughts for me. I call her generous, for she exceeded the good woman I was with before in everything, as in estate; I say, in everything except honesty; and for that, though this was a lady most exactly just, yet I must not forget to say on all occasions, that the

first, though poor, was as uprightly honest as it was possible.

I was no sooner carried away, as I have said, by this good gentlewoman, but the first lady, that is to say, the Mayoress that was, sent her daughters to take care of me ; and another family which had taken notice of me when I was the little gentlewoman sent for me after her, so that I was mightily made of; nay, and they were not a little angry, especially the Mayoress, that her friend had taken me away from her; for, as she said, I was hers by right, she having been the first that took any notice of me. But they that had me would not part with me ; and as for me, I could not be better than where I was.

Here I continued till I was between seventeen and eighteen years old, and here I had all the advantages for my education that could be imagined ; the lady had masters home to teach her daughters to dance, and to speak French, and to write, and others to teach them music ; and as I was always with them, I learned as fast as they ; and though the masters were not appointed to teach me, yet I learned by imitation and inquiry all that they learned by instruction and direction ; so that, in short, I learned to dance and speak French as well as any of them, and to sing much better, for I had a better voice than any of them. I could not so readily come at playing the harpsichord or the spinet, because I had no in-

strument of my own to practise on, and could only come at theirs in the intervals when they left it; but yet I learned tolerably well, and the young ladies at length got two instruments, that is to say, a harpsichord and a spinet too, and then they taught me themselves. But as to dancing, they could hardly help my learning country-dances, because they always wanted me to make up even number; and, on the other hand, they were as heartily willing to learn me everything that they had been taught themselves as I could be to take the learning.

By this means I had, as I have said, all the advantages of education that I could have had if I had been as much a gentlewoman as they were with whom I lived; and in some things I had the advantage of my ladies, though they were my superiors, viz., that mine were all the gifts of nature, and which all their fortunes could not furnish. First, I was apparently handsomer than any of them; secondly, I was better shaped; and, thirdly, I sang better, by which I mean, I had a better voice; in all which you will, I hope, allow me to say, I do not speak my own conceit, but the opinion of all that knew the family.

I had with all these the common vanity of my sex, viz., that being really taken for very handsome, or, if you please, for a great beauty, I very well knew it, and had as good an opinion of myself as anybody

else could have of me, and particularly I loved to hear anybody speak of it, which happened often, and was a great satisfaction to me.

Thus far I have had a smooth story to tell of myself, and in all this part of my life I not only had the reputation of living in a very good family, and a family noted and respected everywhere for virtue and sobriety, and for every valuable thing, but I had the character too of a very sober, modest, and virtuous young woman, and such I had always been; neither had I yet any occasion to think of anything else, or to know what a temptation to wickedness meant.

But that which I was too vain of was my ruin, or rather my vanity was the cause of it. The lady in the house where I was had two sons, young gentlemen of extraordinary parts and behaviour, and it was my misfortune to be very well with them both, but they managed themselves with me in a quite different manner.

The eldest, a gay gentleman, that knew the town as well as the country, and though he had levity enough to do an ill-natured thing, yet had too much judgment of things to pay too dear for his pleasures; he began with that unhappy snare to all women, viz., taking notice upon all occasions how pretty I was, as he called it, how agreeable, how well-carriaged, and the like; and this he contrived so

subtly, as if he had known as well how to catch a woman in his net as a partridge when he went a-setting, for he would contrive to be talking this to his sisters, when, though I was not by, yet he knew I was not so far off but that I should be sure to hear him. His sisters would return softly to him, "Hush, brother, she will hear you; she is but in the next room." Then he would put it off and talk softlier, as if he had not known it, and begin to acknowledge he was wrong; and then, as if he had forgot himself, he would speak aloud again, and I, that was so well pleased to hear it, was sure to listen for it upon all occasions.

After he had thus baited his hook, and found easily enough the method how to lay it in my way, he played an open game; and one day, going by his sister's chamber when I was there, he comes in with an air of gaiety. "Oh, Mrs. Betty," said he to me, "how do you do, Mrs. Betty? Don't your cheeks burn, Mrs. Betty?" I made a curtsey and blushed, but said nothing. "What makes you talk so, brother?" said the lady. "Why," says he, "we have been talking of her below-stairs this half-hour." "Well," says his sister, "you can say no harm of her, that I am sure, so 't is no matter what you have been talking about." "Nay," says he, "'t is so far from talking harm of her, that we have been talking a great deal of good, and a great many fine things

have been said of Mrs. Betty, I assure you; and particularly, that she is the handsomest young woman in Colchester; and, in short, they begin to toast her health in the town."

"I wonder at you, brother," says the sister. "Betty wants but one thing, but she had as good want everything, for the market is against our sex just now; and if a young woman has beauty, birth, breeding, wit, sense, manners, modesty, and all to an extreme, yet if she has not money she 's nobody, she had as good want them all; nothing but money now recommends a woman; the men play the game all into their own hands."

Her younger brother, who was by, cried, "Hold, sister, you run too fast; I am an exception to your rule. I assure you, if I find a woman so accomplished as you talk of, I won't trouble myself about the money." "Oh," says the sister, "but you will take care not to fancy one then without the money."

"You don't know that neither," says the brother.

"But why, sister," says the elder brother, "why do you exclaim so about the fortune? You are none of them that want a fortune, whatever else you want."

"I understand you, brother," replies the lady very smartly; "you suppose I have the money and want the beauty; but as times go now, the first will do, so I have the better of my neighbours."

"Well," says the younger brother "but your

neighbours may be even with you, for beauty will steal a husband sometimes in spite of money, and when the maid chances to be handsomer than the mistress, she oftentimes makes as good a market, and rides in a coach before her."

I thought it was time for me to withdraw, and I did so, but not so far but that I heard all their discourse, in which I heard abundance of fine things said of myself, which prompted my vanity, but, as I soon found, was not the way to increase my interest in the family, for the sister and the younger brother fell grievously out about it; and as he said some very disobliging things to her, upon my account, so I could easily see that she resented them by her future conduct to me, which indeed was very unjust, for I had never had the least thought of what she suspected as to her younger brother; indeed, the elder brother, in his distant, remote way, had said a great many things as in jest, which I had the folly to believe were in earnest, or to flatter myself with the hopes of what I ought to have supposed he never intended.

It happened one day that he came running upstairs, towards the room where his sisters used to sit and work, as he often used to do; and calling to them before he came in, as was his way too, I being there alone, stepped to the door, and said, "Sir, the ladies are not here; they are walked down the garden."

As I stepped forward to say this, he was just got to the door, and clasping me in his arms, as if it had been by chance, "Oh, Mrs. Betty," says he, "are you here? That's better still; I want to speak with you, more than I do with them;" and then, having me in his arms, he kissed me three or four times.

I struggled to get away, and yet did it but faintly neither, and he held me fast, and still kissed me, till he was out of breath, and, sitting down, says he, "Dear Betty, I am in love with you."

His words, I must confess, fired my blood; all my spirits flew about my heart, and put me into disorder enough. He repeated it afterwards several times, that he was in love with me, and my heart spoke as plain as a voice that I liked it; nay, whenever he said, "I am in love with you," my blushes plainly replied, "Would you were, sir." However, nothing else passed at that time; it was but a surprise, and I soon recovered myself. He had stayed longer with me, but he happened to look out at the window and see his sisters coming up the garden, so he took his leave, kissed me again, told me he was very serious, and I should hear more of him very quickly, and away he went infinitely pleased; and had there not been one misfortune in it, I had been in the right, but the mistake lay here, that Mrs. Betty was in earnest, and the gentleman was not.

From this time my head ran upon strange things, and I may truly say I was not myself, to have such a gentleman talk to me of being in love with me, and of my being such a charming creature, as he told me I was. These were things I knew not how to bear; my vanity was elevated to the last degree. It is true I had my head full of pride, but, knowing nothing of the wickedness of the times, I had not one thought of my virtue about me; and had my young master offered it at first sight, he might have taken any liberty he thought fit with me; but he did not see his advantage, which was my happiness for that time.

It was not long but he found an opportunity to catch me again, and almost in the same posture; indeed, it had more of design in it on his part, though not on my part. It was thus: the young ladies were gone a-visiting with their mother; his brother was out of town; and as for his father, he had been at London for a week before. He had so well watched me that he knew where I was, though I did not so much as know that he was in the house, and he briskly comes up the stairs, and seeing me at work, comes into the room to me directly, and began just as he did before, with taking me in his arms, and kissing me for almost a quarter of an hour together.

It was his younger sister's chamber that I was in,

and as there was nobody in the house but the maid below-stairs, he was, it may be, the ruder; in short, he began to be in earnest with me indeed. Perhaps he found me a little too easy, for I made no resistance to him while he only held me in his arms and kissed me; indeed, I was too well pleased with it to resist him much.

Well, tired with that kind of work, we sat down, and there he talked with me a great while; he said he was charmed with me, and that he could not rest till he had told me how he was in love with me, and, if I could love him again, and would make him happy, I should be the saving of his life, and many such fine things. I said little to him again, but easily discovered that I was a fool, and that I did not in the least perceive what he meant.

Then he walked about the room, and taking me by the hand, I walked with him; and by-and-by, taking his advantage, he threw me down upon the bed, and kissed me there most violently; but, to give him his due, offered no manner of rudeness to me, only kissed me a great while. After this he thought he had heard somebody come upstairs, so he got off from the bed, lifted me up, professing a great deal of love for me; but told me it was all an honest affection, and that he meant no ill to me, and with that put five guineas into my hand and went downstairs.

I was more confounded with the money than I was before with the love, and began to be so elevated that I scarce knew the ground I stood on. I am the more particular in this, that if it comes to be read by any innocent young body, they may learn from it to guard themselves against the mischiefs which attend an early knowledge of their own beauty. If a young woman once thinks herself handsome, she never doubts the truth of any man that tells her he is in love with her; for if she believes herself charming enough to captivate him, 't is natural to expect the effects of it.

This gentleman had now fired his inclination as much as he had my vanity, and, as if he had found that he had an opportunity, and was sorry he did not take hold of it, he comes up again in about half-an-hour, and falls to work with me again just as he did before, only with a little less introduction.

At first, when he entered the room, he turned about and shut the door. "Mrs. Betty," said he, "I fancied before somebody was coming upstairs, but it was not so; however," adds he, "if they find me in the room with you, they shan't catch me a-kissing of you." I told him I did not know who should be coming upstairs, for I believed there was nobody in the house but the cook and the other maid, and they never came up those stairs. "Well,

my dear," says he, "'t is good to be sure, however;" and so he sits down, and we began to talk. And now, though I was still on fire with his first visit, and said little, he did as it were put words in my mouth, telling me how passionately he loved me, and that though he could not till he came to his estate, yet he was resolved to make me happy then, and himself too; that is to say, to marry me, and abundance of such things, which I, poor fool, did not understand the drift of, but acted as if there was no kind of love but that which tended to matrimony; and if he had spoken of that, I had no room, as well as no power, to have said no; but we were not come to that length yet.

We had not sat long, but he got up, and, stopping my very breath with kisses, threw me upon the bed again; but then he went further with me than decency permits me to mention, nor had it been in my power to have denied him at that moment had he offered much more than he did.

However, though he took these freedoms with me, it did not go to that which they call the last favour, which, to do him justice, he did not attempt; and he made that self-denial of his a plea for all his freedoms with me upon other occasions after this. When this was over he stayed but a little while, but he put almost a handful of gold in my hand, and left me a thousand protestations of his passion for

me, and of his loving me above all the women in the world.

It will not be strange if I now began to think; but, alas! it was but with very little solid reflection. I had a most unbounded stock of vanity and pride, and but a very little stock of virtue. I did indeed cast sometimes with myself what my young master aimed at, but thought of nothing but the fine words and the gold; whether he intended to marry me or not, seemed a matter of no great consequence to me; nor did I so much as think of making any capitulation for myself, till he made a kind of formal proposal to me, as you shall hear presently.

Thus I gave up myself to ruin without the least concern, and am a fair memento to all young women whose vanity prevails over their virtue. Nothing was ever so stupid on both sides. Had I acted as became me, and resisted as virtue and honour required, he had either desisted his attacks, finding no room to expect the end of his design, or had made fair and honourable proposals of marriage; in which case, whoever blamed him, nobody could have blamed me. In short, if he had known me, and how easy the trifle he aimed at was to be had, he would have troubled his head no further, but have given me four or five guineas, and have lain with me the next time he had come at me. On the other hand, if I had known his thoughts, and how hard he supposed

I would be to be gained, I might have made my own terms, and if I had not capitulated for an immediate marriage, I might for a maintenance till marriage, and might have had what I would; for he was rich to excess, besides what he had in expectation; but I had wholly abandoned all such thoughts, and was taken up only with the pride of my beauty, and of being beloved by such a gentleman. As for the gold, I spent whole hours in looking upon it; I told the guineas over a thousand times a day. Never poor vain creature was so wrapt up with every part of the story as I was, not considering what was before me, and how near my ruin was at the door; and indeed I think I rather wished for that ruin than studied to avoid it.

In the meantime, however, I was cunning enough not to give the least room to any in the family to imagine that I had the least correspondence with him. I scarce ever looked towards him in public, or answered if he spoke to me; when, but for all that, we had every now and then a little encounter, where we had room for a word or two, and now and then a kiss, but no fair opportunity for the mischief intended; and especially considering that he made more circumlocution than he had occasion for; and the work appearing difficult to him, he really made it so.

But as the devil is an unwearied tempter, so he

never fails to find an opportunity for the wickedness he invites to. It was one evening that I was in the garden, with his two younger sisters and himself, when he found means to convey a note into my hand, by which he told me that he would tomorrow desire me publicly to go of an errand for him, and that I should see him somewhere by the way.

Accordingly, after dinner, he very gravely says to me, his sisters being all by, "Mrs. Betty, I must ask a favour of you." "What 's that?" says the second sister. "Nay, sister," says he very gravely, "if you can't spare Mrs. Betty to-day, any other time will do." Yes, they said, they could spare her well enough; and the sister begged pardon for asking. "Well, but," says the eldest sister, "you must tell Mrs. Betty what it is; if it be any private business that we must not hear, you may call her out. There she is." "Why, sister," says the gentleman very gravely, "what do you mean? I only desire her to go into the High Street" (and then he pulls out a turnover), "to such a shop;" and then he tells them a long story of two fine neckcloths he had bid money for, and he wanted to have me go and make an errand to buy a neck to that turnover that he showed, and if they would not take my money for the neckcloths, to bid a shilling more, and haggle with them; and then he made more errands, and

so continued to have such petty business to do, that I should be sure to stay a good while.

When he had given me my errands, he told them a long story of a visit he was going to make to a family they all knew, and where was to be such-and-such gentlemen, and very formally asked his sisters to go with him, and they as formally excused themselves, because of company that they had notice was to come and visit them that afternoon; all which, by the way, he had contrived on purpose.

He had scarce done speaking but his man came up to tell him that Sir W—— H——'s coach stopped at the door; so he runs down, and comes up again immediately. "Alas!" says he aloud, "there's all my mirth spoiled at once; Sir W—— has sent his coach for me, and desires to speak with me." It seems this Sir W—— was a gentleman who lived about three miles off, to whom he had spoke on purpose to lend him his chariot for a particular occasion, and had appointed it to call for him, as it did, about three o'clock.

Immediately he calls for his best wig, hat, and sword, and ordering his man to go to the other place to make his excuse — that was to say, he made an excuse to send his man away — he prepares to go into the coach. As he was going, he stopped awhile, and speaks mighty earnestly to me about his business, and finds an opportunity to say very softly,

"Come away, my dear, as soon as ever you can." I said nothing, but made a curtsey, as if I had done so to what he said in public. In about a quarter of an hour I went out too; I had no dress other than before, except that I had a hood, a mask, a fan, and a pair of gloves in my pocket; so that there was not the least suspicion in the house. He waited for me in a back-lane which he knew I must pass by, and the coachman knew whither to go, which was to a certain place, called Mile End, where lived a confidant of his, where we went in, and where was all the convenience in the world to be as wicked as we pleased.

When we were together he began to talk very gravely to me, and to tell me he did not bring me there to betray me; that his passion for me would not suffer him to abuse me; that he resolved to marry me as soon as he came to his estate; that in the meantime, if I would grant his request, he would maintain me very honourably; and made me a thousand protestations of his sincerity and of his affection to me; and that he would never abandon me, and, as I may say, made a thousand more preambles than he need to have done.

However, as he pressed me to speak, I told him I had no reason to question the sincerity of his love to me after so many protestations, but ——, and there I stopped, as if I left him to guess the rest. "But

what, my dear?" says he. "I guess what you mean: what if you should be with child? Is not that it? Why, then," says he, "I'll take care of you, and provide for you, and the child too; and that you may see I am not in jest," says he, "here's an earnest for you," and with that he pulls out a silk purse with a hundred guineas in it, and gave it me; "and I'll give you such another," says he, "every year till I marry you."

My colour came and went at the sight of the purse, and with the fire of his proposal together, so that I could not say a word, and he easily perceived it; so putting the purse into my bosom, I made no more resistance to him, but let him do just what he pleased, and as often as he pleased; and thus I finished my own destruction at once, for from this day, being forsaken of my virtue and my modesty, I had nothing of value left to recommend me, either to God's blessing or man's assistance.

But things did not end here. I went back to the town, did the business he directed me to, and was at home before anybody thought me long. As for my gentleman, he stayed out till late at night, and there was not the least suspicion in the family either on his account or on mine.

We had after this frequent opportunities to repeat our crime, and especially at home, when his mother and the young ladies went abroad a-visiting, which

he watched so narrowly as never to miss; knowing always beforehand when they went out, and then failed not to catch me all alone, and securely enough; so that we took our fill of our wicked pleasures for near half-a-year; and yet, which was the most to my satisfaction, I was not with child.

But before this half-year was expired, his younger brother, of whom I have made some mention in the beginning of the story, falls to work with me; and he finding me alone in the garden one evening, begins a story of the same kind to me, made good, honest professions of being in love with me, and, in short, proposes fairly and honourably to marry me.

I was now confounded, and driven to such an extremity as the like was never known to me. I resisted the proposal with obstinacy, and began to arm myself with arguments. I laid before him the inequality of the match, the treatment I should meet with in the family, the ingratitude it would be to his good father and mother, who had taken me into their house upon such generous principles, and when I was in such a low condition; and, in short, I said everything to dissuade him that I could imagine except telling him the truth, which would indeed have put an end to it all, but that I durst not think of mentioning.

But here happened a circumstance that I did not expect indeed, which put me to my shifts; for this

young gentleman, as he was plain and honest, so he pretended to nothing but what was so too; and, knowing his own innocence, he was not so careful to make his having a kindness for Mrs. Betty a secret in the house as his brother was. And though he did not let them know that he had talked to me about it, yet he said enough to let his sisters perceive he loved me, and his mother saw it too, which, though they took no notice of to me, yet they did to him, and immediately I found their carriage to me altered more than ever before.

I saw the cloud, though I did not foresee the storm. It was easy, I say, to see their carriage was altered, and that it grew worse and worse every day, till at last I got information that I should in a very little while be desired to remove.

I was not alarmed at the news, having a full satisfaction that I should be provided for; and especially considering that I had reason every day to expect I should be with child, and that then I should be obliged to remove without any pretences for it.

After some time the younger gentleman took an opportunity to tell me that the kindness he had for me had got vent in the family. He did not charge me with it, he said, for he knew well enough which way it came out. He told me his way of talking had been the occasion of it, for that he did not make his respect for me so much a secret as he might

have done, and the reason was, that he was at a point, that if I would consent to have him, he would tell them all openly that he loved me, and that he intended to marry me; that it was true his father and mother might resent it, and be unkind, but he was now in a way to live, being bred to the law, and he did not fear maintaining me; and that, in short, as he believed I would not be ashamed of him, so he was resolved not to be ashamed of me, and that he scorned to be afraid to own me now, whom he resolved to own after I was his wife, and therefore I had nothing to do but to give him my hand, and he would answer for all the rest.

I was now in a dreadful condition indeed, and now I repented heartily my easiness with the eldest brother; not from any reflection of conscience, for I was a stranger to those things, but I could not think of being a whore to one brother and a wife to the other. It came also into my thoughts that the first brother had promised to make me his wife when he came to his estate; but I presently remembered, what I had often thought of, that he had never spoken a word of having me for a wife after he had conquered me for a mistress; and indeed, till now, though I said I thought of it often, yet it gave no disturbance at all, for as he did not seem in the least to lessen his affection to me, so neither did he lessen his bounty, though he had the discretion himself to

desire me not to lay out a penny in clothes, or to make the least show extraordinary, because it would necessarily give jealousy in the family, since everybody knew I could come at such things no manner of ordinary way, but by some private friendship, which they would presently have suspected.

I was now in a great strait, and knew not what to do; the main difficulty was this: the younger brother not only laid close siege to me, but suffered it to be seen. He would come into his sister's room, and his mother's room, and sit down, and talk a thousand kind things to me even before their faces; so that the whole house talked of it, and his mother reproved him for it, and their carriage to me appeared quite altered. In short, his mother had let fall some speeches, as if she intended to put me out of the family; that is, in English, to turn me out of doors. Now I was sure this could not be a secret to his brother, only that he might think, as indeed nobody else yet did, that the youngest brother had made any proposal to me about it; but as I could easily see that it would go further, so I saw likewise there was an absolute necessity to speak of it to him, or that he would speak of it to me, but knew not whether I should break it to him or let it alone till he should break it to me.

Upon serious consideration, for indeed now I began to consider things very seriously, and never till

now, I resolved to tell him of it first; and it was not long before I had an opportunity, for the very next day his brother went to London upon some business, and the family being out a-visiting, just as it happened before, and as indeed was often the case, he came according to his custom to spend an hour or two with Mrs. Betty.

When he had sat down a while he easily perceived there was an alteration in my countenance, that I was not so free and pleasant with him as I used to be, and particularly, that I had been a-crying; he was not long before he took notice of it, and asked me in very kind terms what was the matter, and if anything troubled me. I would have put it off if I could, but it was not to be concealed; so after suffering many importunities to draw that out of me, which I longed as much as possible to disclose, I told him that it was true something did trouble me, and something of such a nature that I could hardly conceal from him, and yet that I could not tell how to tell him of it neither; that it was a thing that not only surprised me, but greatly perplexed me, and that I knew not what course to take, unless he would direct me. He told me with great tenderness, that let it be what it would, I should not let it trouble me, for he would protect me from all the world.

I then began at a distance, and told him I was afraid the ladies had got some secret information of

our correspondence; for that it was easy to see that their conduct was very much changed towards me, and that now it was come to pass that they frequently found fault with me, and sometimes fell quite out with me, though I never gave them the least occasion; that whereas I used always to lie with the elder sister, I was lately put to lie by myself, or with one of the maids; and that I had overheard them several times talking very unkindly about me; but that which confirmed it all was, that one of the servants had told me that she had heard I was to be turned out, and that it was not safe for the family that I should be any longer in the house.

He smiled when he heard of this, and I asked him how he could make so light of it, when he must needs know that if there was any discovery I was undone, and that it would hurt him, though not ruin him, as it would me. I upbraided him, that he was like the rest of his sex, that, when they had the character of a woman at their mercy, oftentimes made it their jest, and at least looked upon it as a trifle, and counted the ruin of those they had had their will of as a thing of no value.

He saw me warm and serious, and he changed his style immediately; he told me he was sorry I should have such a thought of him; that he had never given me the least occasion for it, but had been as tender of my reputation as he could be of his own; that he

was sure our correspondence had been managed with so much address, that not one creature in the family had so much as a suspicion of it; that if he smiled when I told him my thoughts, it was at the assurance he lately received, that our understanding one another was not so much as guessed at, and that when he had told me how much reason he had to be easy, I should smile as he did, for he was very certain it would give me a full satisfaction.

"This is a mystery I cannot understand," says I, "or how it should be to my satisfaction that I am to be turned out of doors; for if our correspondence is not discovered, I know not what else I have done to change the faces of the whole family to me, who formerly used me with so much tenderness, as if I had been one of their own children."

"Why, look you, child," says he, "that they are uneasy about you, that is true; but that they have the least suspicion of the case as it is, and as it respects you and I, is so far from being true, that they suspect my brother Robin; and, in short, they are fully persuaded he makes love to you; nay, the fool has put it into their heads too himself, for he is continually bantering them about it, and making a jest of himself. I confess I think he is wrong to do so, because he cannot but see it vexes them, and makes them unkind to you; but it is a satisfaction to me, because of the assurance it gives me, that they do not

suspect me in the least, and I hope this will be to your satisfaction too."

"So it is," says I, "one way; but this does not reach my case at all, nor is this the chief thing that troubles me, though I have been concerned about that too." "What is it, then?" says he. With which, I fell into tears, and could say nothing to him at all. He strove to pacify me all he could, but began at last to be very pressing upon me to tell what it was. At last I answered, that I thought I ought to tell him too, and that he had some right to know it; besides, that I wanted his direction in the case, for I was in such perplexity that I knew not what course to take, and then I related the whole affair to him. I told him how imprudently his brother had managed himself, in making himself so public; for that if he had kept it a secret, I could but have denied him positively, without giving any reason for it, and he would in time have ceased his solicitations; but that he had the vanity, first, to depend upon it that I would not deny him, and then had taken the freedom to tell his design to the whole house.

I told him how far I had resisted him, and how sincere and honourable his offers were; "but," says I, "my case will be doubly hard; for as they carry it ill to me now, because he desires to have me, they 'll carry it worse when they shall find I have denied him; and they will presently say, there 's something

else in it, and that I am married already to somebody else, or that I would never refuse a match so much above me as this was."

This discourse surprised him indeed very much. He told me that it was a critical point indeed for me to manage, and he did not see which way I should get out of it; but he would consider of it, and let me know next time we met, what resolution he was come to about it; and in the meantime desired I would not give my consent to his brother, nor yet give him a flat denial, but that I would hold him in suspense a while.

I seemed to start at his saying, I should not give him my consent. I told him, he knew very well I had no consent to give; that he had engaged himself to marry me, and that I was thereby engaged to him; that he had all along told me I was his wife, and I looked upon myself as effectually so as if the ceremony had passed; and that it was from his own mouth that I did so, he having all along persuaded me to call myself his wife.

"Well, my dear," says he, "don't be concerned at that now; if I am not your husband, I'll be as good as a husband to you; and do not let those things trouble you now, but let me look a little further into this affair, and I shall be able to say more next time we meet."

He pacified me as well as he could with this, but I

found he was very thoughtful, and that though he was very kind to me, and kissed me a thousand times, and more I believe, and gave me money too, yet he offered no more all the while we were together, which was above two hours, and which I much wondered at, considering how it used to be, and what opportunity we had.

His brother did not come from London for five or six days, and it was two days more before he got an opportunity to talk with him; but then getting him by himself, he talked very close to him about it, and the same evening found means (for we had a long conference together) to repeat all their discourse to me, which, as near as I can remember, was to the purpose following. He told him he heard strange news of him since he went, viz., that he made love to Mrs. Betty. "Well," says his brother, a little angrily, "and what then? What has anybody to do with that?" "Nay," says his brother, "don't be angry, Robin; I don't pretend to have anything to do with it, but I find they do concern themselves about it, and that they have used the poor girl ill about it, which I should take as done to myself." "Whom do you mean by THEY?" says Robin. "I mean my mother and the girls," says the elder brother.

"But hark ye," says his brother, "are you in earnest? Do you really love the girl?" "Why,

then," says Robin, "I will be free with you; I do love her above all the women in the world, and I will have her, let them say and do what they will. I believe the girl will not deny me."

It stuck me to the heart when he told me this, for though it was most rational to think I would not deny him, yet I knew in my own conscience I must, and I saw my ruin in my being obliged to do so; but I knew it was my business to talk otherwise then, so I interrupted him in his story thus: "Ay!" said I, "does he think I cannot deny him? But he shall find I can deny him for all that." "Well, my dear," says he, "but let me give you the whole story as it went on between us, and then say what you will."

Then he went on and told me that he replied thus: "But, brother, you know she has nothing, and you may have several ladies with good fortunes." "'T is no matter for that," said Robin; "I love the girl, and I will never please my pocket in marrying, and not please my fancy." "And so, my dear," adds he, "there is no opposing him."

"Yes, yes," says I, "I can oppose him; I have learned to say No, now, though I had not learnt it before; if the best lord in the land offered me marriage now, I could very cheerfully say No to him."

"Well, but, my dear," says he, "what can you

say to him? You know, as you said before, he will ask you many questions about it, and all the house will wonder what the meaning of it should be."

"Why," says I, smiling, "I can stop all their mouths at one clap by telling him, and them too, that I am married already to his elder brother."

He smiled a little too at the word, but I could see it startled him, and he could not hide the disorder it put him into. However, he returned, "Why, though that may be true in some sense, yet I suppose you are but in jest when you talk of giving such an answer as that; it may not be convenient on many accounts."

"No, no," says I pleasantly, "I am not so fond of letting that secret come out, without your consent."

"But what, then, can you say to them," says he, "when they find you positive against a match which would be apparently so much to your advantage?"

"Why," says I, "should I be at a loss? First, I am not obliged to give them any reason; on the other hand, I may tell them I am married already, and stop there, and that will be a full stop too to him, for he can have no reason to ask one question after it."

"Ay," says he; "but the whole house will tease you about that, and if you deny them positively, they will be disobliged at you, and suspicious besides."

"Why," says I, "what can I do? What would

you have me do? I was in strait enough before, as I told you, and acquainted you with the circumstances, that I might have your advice."

"My dear," says he, "I have been considering very much upon it, you may be sure, and though the advice has many mortifications in it to me, and may at first seem strange to you, yet, all things considered, I see no better way for you than to let him go on, and if you find him hearty and in earnest, marry him."

I gave him a look full of horror at those words, and turning pale as death, was at the very point of sinking down out of the chair I sat in; when, giving a start, "My dear," says he aloud, "what's the matter with you? Where are you a-going?" and a great many such things; and with jogging and calling to me, fetched me a little to myself, though it was a good while before I fully recovered my senses, and was not able to speak for several minutes.

When I was fully recovered he began again. "My dear," says he, "I would have you consider seriously of it. You may see plainly how the family stand in this case, and they would be stark mad if it was my case, as it is my brother's; and for aught I see, it would be my ruin and yours too."

"Ay!" says I, still speaking angrily; "are all your protestations and vows to be shaken by the dislike of the family? Did I not always object that to

you, and you made a light thing of it, as what you were above, and would not value; and is it come to this now? Is this your faith and honour, your love, and the solidity of your promises?"

He continued perfectly calm, notwithstanding all my reproaches, and I was not sparing of them at all; but he replied at last, "My dear, I have not broken one promise with you yet; I did tell you I would marry you when I was come to my estate; but you see my father is a hale, healthy man, and may live these thirty years still, and not be older than several are round us in the town; and you never proposed my marrying you sooner, because you know it might be my ruin; and as to the rest, I have not failed you in anything."

I could not deny a word of this. "But why, then," says I, "can you persuade me to such a horrid step as leaving you, since you have not left me? Will you allow no affection, no love on my side, where there has been so much on your side? Have I made you no returns? Have I given no testimony of my sincerity and of my passion? Are the sacrifices I have made of honour and modesty to you no proof of my being tied to you in bonds too strong to be broken?"

"But here, my dear," says he, "you may come into a safe station, and appear with honour, and the remembrance of what we have done may be wrapped

up in an eternal silence, as if it had never happened; you shall always have my sincere affection, only then it shall be honest, and perfectly just to my brother; you shall be my dear sister, as now you are my dear ——" and there he stopped.

"Your dear whore," says I, "you would have said, and you might as well have said it; but I understand you. However, I desire you to remember the long discourses you have had with me, and the many hours' pains you have taken to persuade me to believe myself an honest woman; that I was your wife intentionally, and that it was as effectual a marriage that had passed between us as if we had been publicly wedded by the parson of the parish. You know these have been your own words to me."

I found this was a little too close upon him, but I made it up in what follows. He stood stock-still for a while, and said nothing, and I went on thus: "You cannot," says I, "without the highest injustice, believe that I yielded upon all these persuasions without a love not to be questioned, not to be shaken again by anything that could happen afterward. If you have such dishonourable thoughts of me, I must ask you what foundation have I given for such a suggestion? If, then, I have yielded to the importunities of my affection, and if I have been persuaded to believe that I am really your wife, shall I now give the lie to all those arguments, and call

myself your whore, or mistress, which is the same thing? And will you transfer me to your brother? Can you transfer my affection? Can you bid me cease loving you, and bid me love him? Is it in my power, think you, to make such a change at demand? No, sir," said I, "depend upon it 't is impossible, and whatever the change on your side may be, I will ever be true; and I had much rather, since it has come that unhappy length, be your whore, than your brother's wife."

He appeared pleased and touched with the impression of this last discourse, and told me that he stood where he did before; that he had not been unfaithful to me in any one promise he had ever made yet, but that there were so many terrible things presented themselves to his view in the affair before me, that he had thought of the other as a remedy, only that he thought this would not be an entire parting us, but we might love as friends all our days, and perhaps with more satisfaction than we should in the station we were now in; that he durst say, I could not apprehend anything from him as to betraying a secret, which could not but be the destruction of us both, if it came out; that he had but one question to ask of me that could lie in the way of it, and if that question was answered, he could not but think still it was the only step I could take.

I guessed at his question presently, viz., whether I was not with child. As to that, I told him he need not be concerned about it, for I was not with child. "Why, then, my dear," says he, "we have no time to talk further now. Consider of it; I cannot but be of the opinion still, that it will be the best course you can take." And with this he took his leave, and the more hastily too, his mother and sisters ringing at the gate just at the moment he had risen up to go.

He left me in the utmost confusion of thought; and he easily perceived it the next day, and all the rest of the week, but he had no opportunity to come at me all that week, till the Sunday after, when I, being indisposed, did not go to church, and he, making some excuse, stayed at home.

And now he had me an hour and half again by myself, and we fell into the same arguments all over again; at last I asked him warmly, what opinion he must have of my modesty, that he could suppose I should so much as entertain a thought of lying with two brothers, and assured him it could never be. I added, if he was to tell me that he would never see me more, than which nothing but death could be more terrible, yet I could never entertain a thought so dishonourable to myself, and so base to him; and therefore, I entreated him, if he had one grain of respect or affection left for me, that he would

speak no more of it to me, or that he would pull his sword out and kill me. He appeared surprised at my obstinacy, as he called it; told me I was unkind to myself, and unkind to him in it; that it was a crisis unlooked for upon us both, but that he did not see any other way to save us both from ruin, and therefore he thought it the more unkind; but that if he must say no more of it to me, he added with an unusual coldness, that he did not know anything else we had to talk of; and so he rose up to take his leave. I rose up too, as if with the same indifference; but when he came to give me as it were a parting kiss, I burst out into such a passion of crying, that though I would have spoke, I could not, and only pressing his hand, seemed to give him the adieu, but cried vehemently.

He was sensibly moved with this; so he sat down again, and said a great many kind things to me, but still urged the necessity of what he had proposed; all the while insisting, that if I did refuse, he would notwithstanding provide for me; but letting me plainly see that he would decline me in the main point — nay, even as a mistress; making it a point of honour not to lie with the woman that, for aught he knew, might one time or other come to be his brother's wife.

The bare loss of him as a gallant was not so much my affliction as the loss of his person, whom

indeed I loved to distraction; and the loss of all the expectations I had, and which I always built my hopes upon, of having him one day for my husband. These things oppressed my mind so much, that, in short, the agonies of my mind threw me into a high fever, and long it was, that none in the family expected my life.

I was reduced very low indeed, and was often delirious; but nothing lay so near me, as the fear that when I was light-headed, I should say something or other to his prejudice. I was distressed in my mind also to see him, and so he was to see me, for he really loved me most passionately; but it could not be; there was not the least room to desire it on one side or other.

It was near five weeks that I kept my bed; and though the violence of my fever abated in three weeks, yet it several times returned; and the physicians said two or three times, they could do no more for me, but that they must leave nature and the distemper to fight it out. After the end of five weeks I grew better, but was so weak, so altered, and recovered so slowly, that the physicians apprehended I should go into a consumption; and which vexed me most, they gave their opinion that my mind was oppressed, that something troubled me, and, in short, that I was in love. Upon this, the whole house set upon me to press me to tell whether I was in love or

not, and with whom; but as I well might, I denied my being in love at all.

They had on this occasion a squabble one day about me at table, that had like to put the whole family in an uproar. They happened to be all at table but the father; as for me, I was ill, and in my chamber. At the beginning of the talk the old gentlewoman, who had sent me somewhat to eat, bid her maid go up and ask me if I would have any more; but the maid brought down word I had not eaten half what she had sent me already. "Alas," says the old lady, "that poor girl! I am afraid she will never be well." "Well!" says the elder brother; "how should Mrs. Betty be well? They say she is in love." "I believe nothing of it," says the old gentlewoman. "I don't know," says the elder sister, "what to say to it; they have made such a rout about her being so handsome, and so charming, and I know not what, and that in her hearing too, that has turned the creature's head, I believe, and who knows what possessions may follow such doings? For my part, I don't know what to make of it."

"Why, sister, you must acknowledge she is very handsome," says the elder brother. "Ay, and a great deal handsomer than you, sister," says Robin, "and that's your mortification." "Well, well, that is not the question," says his sister; "the girl is well

enough, and she knows it; she need not be told of it to make her vain."

"We don't talk of her being vain," says the elder brother, "but of her being in love; maybe she is in love with herself; it seems my sisters think so."

"I would she was in love with me," says Robin; "I'd quickly put her out of her pain." "What d'ye mean by that, son?" says the old lady; "how can you talk so?" "Why, madam," says Robin again, very honestly, "do you think I'd let the poor girl die for love, and of me, too, that is so near at hand to be had?" "Fie, brother!" says the second sister, "how can you talk so? Would you take a creature that has not a groat in the world?" "Prithee, child," says Robin, "beauty's a portion, and good humour with it is a double portion; I wish thou hadst half her stock of both for thy portion." So there was her mouth stopped.

"I find," says the eldest sister, "if Betty is not in love, my brother is. I wonder he has not broke his mind to Betty; I warrant she won't say No." "They that yield when they are asked," says Robin, "are one step before them that were never asked to yield, and two steps before them that yield before they are asked; and that's an answer to you, sister."

This fired the sister, and she flew into a passion, and said, things were come to that pass that it was

time the wench, meaning me, was out of the family; and but that she was not fit to be turned out, she hoped her father and mother would consider of it, as soon as she could be removed.

Robin replied, that was for the master and mistress of the family, who were not to be taught by one that had so little judgment as his eldest sister.

It ran up a great deal further; the sister scolded, Robin rallied and bantered, but poor Betty lost ground by it extremely in the family. I heard of it, and cried heartily, and the old lady came up to me, somebody having told her that I was so much concerned about it. I complained to her that it was very hard the doctors should pass such a censure upon me, for which they had no ground; and that it was still harder, considering the circumstances I was under in the family; that I hoped I had done nothing to lessen her esteem for me, or given any occasion for the bickering between her sons and daughters, and had more need to think of a coffin than of being in love, and begged she would not let me suffer in her opinion for anybody's mistakes but my own.

She was sensible of the justice of what I said, but told me, since there had been such a clamour among them, and that her younger son talked after such a rattling way as he did, she desired I would be so faithful to her as to answer her but one question

sincerely. I told her I would, and with the utmost plainness and sincerity. Why, then, the question was, whether there was anything between her son Robert and me. I told her with all the protestations of sincerity that I was able to make, and as I might well do, that there was not, nor ever had been; I told her that Mr. Robert had rattled and jested, as she knew it was his way, and that I took it always as I supposed he meant it, to be a wild airy way of discourse that had no signification in it; and assured her that there was not the least tittle of what she understood by it between us; and that those who had suggested it had done me a great deal of wrong, and Mr. Robert no service at all.

The old lady was fully satisfied, and kissed me, spoke cheerfully to me, and bid me take care of my health and want for nothing, and so took her leave. But when she came down she found the brother and all his sisters together by the ears; they were angry, even to passion, at his upbraiding them with their being homely, and having never had any sweethearts, never having been asked the question, their being so forward as almost to ask first, and the like. He rallied them with Mrs. Betty; how pretty, how good-humoured, how she sung better than they did, and danced better, and how much handsomer she was; and in doing this he omitted no ill-natured

thing that could vex them. The old lady came down in the height of it, and to stop it, told them the discourse she had had with me, and how I answered, that there was nothing between Mr. Robert and I.

"She 's wrong there," says Robin, "for if there was not a great deal between us, we should be closer together than we are. I told her I loved her hugely," says he, "but I could never make the jade believe I was in earnest." "I do not know how you should," says his mother; "nobody in their senses could believe you were in earnest, to talk so to a poor girl, whose circumstances you know so well."

"But prithee, son," adds she, "since you tell us you could not make her believe you were in earnest, what must we believe about it? For you ramble so in your discourse that nobody knows whether you are in earnest or in jest; but as I find the girl, by your own confession, has answered truly, I wish you would do so too, and tell me seriously, so that I may depend upon it, is there anything in it or no? Are you in earnest or no? Are you distracted, indeed, or are you not? 'T is a weighty question; I wish you would make us easy about it."

"By my faith, madam," says Robin, "'t is in vain to mince the matter, or tell any more lies about it; I am in earnest, as much as a man is that 's going to be hanged. If Mrs. Betty would say she loved me,

and that she would marry me, I'd have her to-morrow morning fasting, and say, 'To have and to hold,' instead of eating my breakfast."

"Well," says the mother, "then there's one son lost;" and she said it in a very mournful tone, as one greatly concerned at it. "I hope not, madam," says Robin; "no man is lost when a good wife has found him." "Why, but, child," says the old lady, "she is a beggar." "Why, then, madam, she has the more need of charity," says Robin; "I'll take her off the hands of the parish, and she and I'll beg together." "It's bad jesting with such things," says the mother. "I don't jest, madam," says Robin; "we'll come and beg your pardon, madam, and your blessing, madam, and my father's." "This is all out of the way, son," says the mother. "If you are in earnest you are undone." "I am afraid not," says he, "for I am really afraid she won't have me. After all my sister's huffing, I believe I shall never be able to persuade her to it."

"That's a fine tale, indeed. She is not so far gone neither. Mrs. Betty is no fool," says the youngest sister. "Do you think she has learned to say No, any more than other people?" "No, Mrs. Mirth-wit," says Robin, "Mrs. Betty's no fool, but Mrs. Betty may be engaged some other way, and what then?" "Nay," says the eldest sister, "we can say nothing to that. Who must it be to, then?

She is never out of the doors; it must be between you." "I have nothing to say to that," says Robin. "I have been examined enough; there's my brother. If it must be between us, go to work with him."

This stung the elder brother to the quick, and he concluded that Robin had discovered something. However, he kept himself from appearing disturbed. "Prithee," says he, "don't go to sham your stories off upon me; I tell you I deal in no such ware; I have nothing to say to no Mrs. Bettys in the parish;" and with that he rose up and brushed off. "No," says the eldest sister, "I dare answer for my brother; he knows the world better."

Thus the discourse ended; but it left the eldest brother quite confounded. He concluded his brother had made a full discovery, and he began to doubt whether I had been concerned in it or not; but with all his management, he could not bring it about to get at me. At last, he was so perplexed that he was quite desperate, and resolved he would see me whatever came of it. In order to this, he contrived it so, that one day after dinner, watching his eldest sister, till he could see her go upstairs, he runs after her. "Hark ye, sister," says he, "where is this sick woman? May not a body see her?" "Yes," says the sister, "I believe you may; but let me go in first a little, and I'll tell you." So she ran up to

the door, and gave me notice and presently called to him again. "Brother," says she, "you may come in if you please." So in he came, just in the same kind of rant. "Well," says he at the door, as he came in, "where's this sick body that's in love? How do ye do, Mrs. Betty?" I would have got up out of my chair, but was so weak I could not for a good while; and he saw it, and his sister too; and she said, "Come, do not strive to stand up; my brother desires no ceremony, especially now you are so weak." "No, no, Mrs. Betty, pray sit still," says he, and so sits himself down in a chair over against me, and appeared as if he was mighty merry.

He talked a deal of rambling stuff to his sister and to me; sometimes of one thing, sometimes another, on purpose to amuse her, and every now and then would turn it upon the old story. "Poor Mrs. Betty," says he, "it is a sad thing to be in love; why, it has reduced you sadly." At last I spoke a little. "I am glad to see you so merry, sir," says I; "but I think the doctor might have found something better to do than to make his game of his patients. If I had been ill of no other distemper, I know the proverb too well to have let him come to me." "What proverb?" says he. "What —

'Where love is the case,
The doctor's an ass.'

Is not that it, Mrs Betty?" I smiled, and said nothing. "Nay," says he, "I think the effect has proved it to be love; for it seems the doctor has done you little service; you mend very slowly, they say. I doubt there 's somewhat in it, Mrs Betty; I doubt you are sick of the incurables." I smiled, and said, "No, indeed, sir, that 's none of my distemper."

We had a deal of such discourse, and sometimes others that signified as little. By-and-by he asked me to sing them a song, at which I smiled, and said my singing days were over. At last he asked me if he should play upon his flute to me; his sister said, she believed my head could not bear it. I bowed, and said, "Pray, madam, do not hinder it; I love the flute very much." Then his sister said, "Well, do, then, brother." With that he pulled out the key of his closet. "Dear sister," says he, "I am very lazy; do step and fetch my flute; it lies in such a drawer," naming a place where he was sure it was not, that she might be a little while a-looking for it.

As soon as she was gone, he related the whole story to me of the discourse his brother had about me, and his concern about it, which was the reason of his contriving this visit. I assured him I had never opened my mouth either to his brother or to anybody else. I told him the dreadful exigence I was in; that my love to him, and his offering to have me forget that affection, and remove it to another,

had thrown me down; and that I had a thousand times wished I might die rather than recover, and to have the same circumstances to struggle with as I had before. I added that I foresaw that as soon as I was well I must quit the family, and that as for marrying his brother, I abhorred the thoughts of it after what had been my case with him, and that he might depend upon it I would never see his brother again upon that subject; that if he would break all his vows, and oaths, and engagements with me, be that between his conscience and himself; but he should never be able to say that I, whom he had persuaded to call myself his wife, and who had given him the liberty to use me as a wife, was not as faithful to him as a wife ought to be, whatever he might be to me.

He was going to reply, and had said that he was sorry I could not be persuaded, and was a-going to say more, but he heard his sister a-coming, and so did I; and yet I forced out these few words as a reply, that I could never be persuaded to love one brother and marry the other. He shook his head, and said, "Then I am ruined," meaning himself; and that moment his sister entered the room, and told him she could not find the flute. "Well," says he merrily, "this laziness won't do;" so he gets up, and goes himself to look for it, but comes back without it too; not but that he could have found it, but he

had no mind to play; and, besides, the errand he sent his sister on was answered another way; for he only wanted to speak to me, which he had done, though not much to his satisfaction.

I had, however, a great deal of satisfaction in having spoken my mind to him in freedom, and with such an honest plainness, as I have related; and though it did not at all work the way I desired, that is to say, to oblige the person to me the more, yet it took from him all possibility of quitting me but by a downright breach of honour, and giving up all the faith of a gentleman, which he had so often engaged by, never to abandon me, but to make me his wife as soon as he came to his estate.

It was not many weeks after this before I was about the house again, and began to grow well; but I continued melancholy and retired, which amazed the whole family, except he that knew the reason of it; yet it was a great while before he took any notice of it, and I, as backward to speak as he, carried as respectfully to him, but never offered to speak a word that was particular of any kind whatsoever; and this continued for sixteen or seventeen weeks; so that, as I expected every day to be dismissed the family, on account of what distaste they had taken another way, in which I had no guilt, I expected to hear no more of this gentleman, after all his solemn vows, but to be ruined and abandoned.

At last I broke the way myself in the family for my removing; for being talking seriously with the old lady one day, about my own circumstances, and how my distemper had left a heaviness upon my spirits, the old lady said, "I am afraid, Betty, what I have said to you about my son has had some influence upon you, and that you are melancholy on his account; pray, will you let me know how the matter stands with you both, if it may not be improper? For, as for Robin, he does nothing but rally and banter when I speak of it to him." "Why, truly, madam," said I, "that matter stands as I wish it did not, and I shall be very sincere with you in it, whatever befalls me. Mr. Robert has several times proposed marriage to me, which is what I had no reason to expect, my poor circumstances considered; but I have always resisted him, and that perhaps in terms more positive than became me, considering the regard that I ought to have for every branch of your family; but," said I, "madam, I could never so far forget my obligations to you and all your house, to offer to consent to a thing which I knew must needs be disobliging to you, and have positively told him that I would never entertain a thought of that kind unless I had your consent, and his father's also, to whom I was bound by so many invincible obligations."

"And is this possible, Mrs. Betty?" says the old lady. "Then you have been much juster to us than

we have been to you; for we have all looked upon you as a kind of a snare to my son, and I had a proposal to make you for your removing, for fear of it; but I had not yet mentioned it you, because I was afraid of grieving you too much, lest it should throw you down again; for we have a respect for you still, though not so much as to have it be the ruin of my son; but if it be as you say, we have all wronged you very much."

"As to the truth of what I say, madam," said I, "I refer to your son himself; if he will do me any justice, he must tell you the story just as I have told it."

Away goes the old lady to her daughters and tells them the whole story, just as I had told it her; and they were surprised at it, you may be sure, as I believed they would be. One said she could never have thought it; another said Robin was a fool; a third said she would not believe a word of it, and she would warrant that Robin would tell the story another way. But the old lady, who was resolved to go to the bottom of it before I could have the least opportunity of acquainting her son with what had passed, resolved, too, that she would talk with her son immediately, and to that purpose sent for him, for he was gone but to a lawyer's house in the town, and upon her sending he returned immediately.

Upon his coming up to them, for they were all

together, "Sit down, Robin," says the old lady; "I must have some talk with you." "With all my heart, madam," says Robin, looking very merry. "I hope it is about a good wife, for I am at a great loss in that affair." "How can that be?" says his mother. "Did not you say you resolved to have Mrs. Betty?" "Ay, madam," says Robin; "but there is one that has forbid the banns." "Forbid the banns! Who can that be?" "Even Mrs. Betty herself," says Robin. "How so?" says his mother. "Have you asked her the question, then?" "Yes, indeed, madam," says Robin; "I have attacked her in form five times since she was sick, and am beaten off; the jade is so stout she won't capitulate nor yield upon any terms, except such as I can't effectually grant." "Explain yourself," says the mother, "for I am surprised; I do not understand you. I hope you are not in earnest."

"Why, madam," says he, "the case is plain enough upon me, it explains itself; she won't have me, she says; is not that plain enough? I think 't is plain, and pretty rough too." "Well, but," says the mother, "you talk of conditions that you cannot grant; what does she want — a settlement? Her jointure ought to be according to her portion; what does she bring?" "Nay, as to fortune," says Robin, "she is rich enough; I am satisfied in that point; but 't is I that am not able to come up to her

terms, and she is positive she will not have me without."

Here the sisters put in. "Madam," says the second sister, "'t is impossible to be serious with him; he will never give a direct answer to anything; you had better let him alone, and talk no more of it; you know how to dispose of her out of his way." Robin was a little warmed with his sister's rudeness, but he was even with her presently. "There are two sorts of people, madam," says he, turning to his mother, "that there is no contending with; that is, a wise body and a fool; 't is a little hard I should engage with both of them together."

The younger sister then put in. "We must be fools indeed," says she, "in my brother's opinion, that he should make us believe he has seriously asked Mrs. Betty to marry him, and she has refused him."

"Answer, and answer not, says Solomon," replied her brother. "When your brother had said that he had asked her no less than five times, and that she positively denied him, methinks a younger sister need not question the truth of it, when her mother did not." "My mother, you see, did not understand it," says the second sister. "There 's some difference," says Robin, "between desiring me to explain it, and telling me she did not believe it."

"Well, but, son," says the old lady, "if you are

disposed to let us into the mystery of it, what were those hard conditions?" "Yes, madam," says Robin, "I had done it before now, if the teasers here had not worried me by way of interruption. The conditions are, that I bring my father and you to consent to it, and without that she protests she will never see me more upon that head; and the conditions, as I said, I suppose I shall never be able to grant. I hope my warm sisters will be answered now, and blush a little."

This answer was surprising to them all, though less to the mother, because of what I had said to her. As to the daughters, they stood mute a great while; but the mother said, with some passion, "Well, I heard this before, but I could not believe it; but if it is so, then we have all done Betty wrong, and she has behaved better than I expected." "Nay," says the eldest sister, "if it is so, she has acted handsomely indeed." "I confess," says the mother, "it was none of her fault, if he was enough fool to take a fancy to her; but to give such an answer to him, shows more respect to us than I can tell how to express; I shall value the girl the better for it, as long as I know her." "But I shall not," says Robin, "unless you will give your consent." "I'll consider of that awhile," says the mother; "I assure you, if there were not some other objections, this conduct of hers would go a great way to bring

me to consent." "I wish it would go quite through with it," says Robin; "if you had as much thought about making me easy as you have about making me rich, you would soon consent to it."

"Why, Robin," says the mother again, "are you really in earnest? Would you fain have her?" "Really, madam," says Robin, "I think 't is hard you should question me again upon that head. I won't say that I will have her. How can I resolve that point, when you see I cannot have her without your consent? But this I will say, I am earnest, that I will never have anybody else, if I can help it. Betty or nobody is the word, and the question which of the two shall be in your breast to decide, madam, provided only, that my good-humoured sisters here may have no vote in it."

All this was dreadful to me, for the mother began to yield, and Robin pressed her home in it. On the other hand, she advised with the eldest son, and he used all the arguments in the world to persuade her to consent; alleging his brother's passionate love for me, and my generous regard to the family, in refusing my own advantages upon such a nice point of honour, and a thousand such things. And as to the father, he was a man in a hurry of public affairs and getting money, seldom at home, thoughtful of the main chance, but left all those things to his wife.

You may easily believe, that when the plot was thus, as they thought, broke out, it was not so difficult or so dangerous for the elder brother, whom nobody suspected of anything, to have a freer access than before; nay, the mother, which was just as he wished, proposed it to him to talk with Mrs. Betty. "It may be, son," said she, "you may see farther into the thing than I, and see if she has been so positive as Robin says she has been, or no." This was as well as he could wish, and he, as it were, yielding to talk with me at his mother's request, she brought me to him into her own chamber, told me her son had some business with me at her request, and then she left us together, and he shut the door after her.

He came back to me and took me in his arms, and kissed me very tenderly; but told me it was now come to that crisis, that I should make myself happy or miserable as long as I lived; that if I could not comply to his desire, we should both be ruined. Then he told me the whole story between Robin, as he called him, and his mother, and his sisters, and himself, as above. "And now, dear child," says he, "consider what it will be to marry a gentleman of a good family, in good circumstances, and with the consent of the whole house, and to enjoy all that the world can give you; and what, on the other hand, to be sunk into the dark circum-

stances of a woman that has lost her reputation; and that though I shall be a private friend to you while I live, yet as I shall be suspected always, so you will be afraid to see me, and I shall be afraid to own you."

He gave me no time to reply, but went on with me thus: "What has happened between us, child, so long as we both agree to do so, may be buried and forgotten. I shall always be your sincere friend, without any inclination to nearer intimacy when you become my sister; and we shall have all the honest part of conversation without any reproaches between us of having done amiss. I beg of you to consider it, and do not stand in the way of your own safety and prosperity; and to satisfy you that I am sincere," added he, "I here offer you five hundred pounds to make you some amends for the freedoms I have taken with you, which we shall look upon as some of the follies of our lives, which 't is hoped we may repent of."

He spoke this in so much more moving terms than it is possible for me to express, that you may suppose as he held me above an hour and a half in this discourse; so he answered all my objections, and fortified his discourse with all the arguments that human wit and art could devise.

I cannot say, however, that anything he said made impression enough upon me so as to give me any

thought of the matter, till he told me at last very plainly, that if I refused, he was sorry to add that he could never go on with me in that station as we stood before; that though he loved me as well as ever, and that I was as agreeable to him, yet the sense of virtue had not so forsaken him as to suffer him to lie with a woman that his brother courted to make his wife; that if he took his leave of me, with a denial from me in this affair, whatever he might do for me in the point of support, grounded on his first engagement of maintaining me, yet he would not have me be surprised that he was obliged to tell me he could not allow himself to see me any more; and that, indeed, I could not expect it of him.

I received this last part with some tokens of surprise and disorder, and had much ado to avoid sinking down, for indeed I loved him to an extravagance not easy to imagine; but he perceived my disorder, and entreated me to consider seriously of it; assured me that it was the only way to preserve our mutual affection; that in this station we might love as friends, with the utmost passion, and with a love of relation untainted, free from our own just reproaches, and free from other people's suspicions; that he should ever acknowledge his happiness owing to me; that he would be debtor to me as long as he lived, and would be paying that debt as long as he had breath. Thus he

wrought me up, in short, to a kind of hesitation in the matter; having the dangers on one side represented in lively figures, and, indeed, heightened by my imagination of being turned out to the wide world a mere cast-off whore, for it was no less, and perhaps exposed as such, with little to provide for myself, with no friend, no acquaintance in the whole world, out of that town, and there I could not pretend to stay. All this terrified me to the last degree, and he took care upon all occasions to lay it home to me in the worst colours. On the other hand, he failed not to set forth the easy, prosperous life which I was going to live.

He answered all that I could object from affection, and from former engagements, with telling me the necessity that was before us of taking other measures now; and as to his promises of marriage, the nature of things, he said, had put an end to that, by the probability of my being his brother's wife, before the time to which his promises all referred.

Thus, in a word, I may say, he reasoned me out of my reason; he conquered all my arguments, and I began to see a danger that I was in, which I had not considered of before, and that was, of being dropped by both of them, and left alone in the world to shift for myself.

This, and his persuasion, at length prevailed with me to consent, though with so much reluctance, that

it was easy to see I should go to church like a bear to the stake. I had some little apprehensions about me, too, lest my new spouse, who, by the way, I had not the least affection for, should be skilful enough to challenge me on another account, upon our first coming to bed together; but whether he did it with a design or not, I know not, but his elder brother took care to make him very much fuddled before he went to bed, so that I had the satisfaction of a drunken bedfellow the first night. How he did it I know not, but I concluded that he certainly contrived it, that his brother might be able to make no judgment of the difference between a maid and a married woman; nor did he ever entertain any notions of it, or disturb his thoughts about it.

I should go back a little here, to where I left off. The elder brother having thus managed me, his next business was to manage his mother, and he never left till he had brought her to acquiesce and be passive, even without acquainting the father, other than by post letters; so that she consented to our marrying privately, leaving her to manage the father afterwards.

Then he cajoled with his brother, and persuaded him what service he had done him, and how he had brought his mother to consent, which, though true, was not indeed done to serve him, but to serve himself; but thus diligently did he cheat him, and had

the thanks of a faithful friend for shifting off his whore into his brother's arms for a wife. So naturally do men give up honour and justice, and even Christianity, to secure themselves.

I must now come back to brother Robin, as we always called him, who having got his mother's consent, as above, came big with the news to me, and told me the whole story of it, with a sincerity so visible, that I must confess it grieved me that I must be the instrument to abuse so honest a gentleman. But there was no remedy; he would have me, and I was not obliged to tell him that I was his brother's whore, though I had no other way to put him off; so I came gradually into it, and behold we were married.

Modesty forbids me to reveal the secrets of the marriage-bed, but nothing could have happened more suitable to my circumstances than that, as above, my husband was so fuddled when he came to bed, that he could not remember in the morning whether he had had any conversation with me or no, and I was obliged to tell him he had, though, in reality, he had not, that I might be sure he could make no inquiry about anything else.

It concerns the story in hand very little to enter into the further particulars of the family, or of myself, for the five years that I lived with this husband, only to observe that I had two children by him, and

that at the end of the five years he died. He had been really a very good husband to me, and we lived very agreeably together; but as he had not received much from them, and had in the little time he lived acquired no great matters, so my circumstances were not great, nor was I much mended by the match. Indeed, I had preserved the elder brother's bonds to me to pay me £500, which he offered me for my consent to marry his brother; and this, with what I had saved of the money he formerly gave me, and about as much more by my husband, left me a widow with about £1200 in my pocket.

My two children were, indeed, taken happily off of my hands by my husband's father and mother, and that was all they got by Mrs. Betty.

I confess I was not suitably affected with the loss of my husband; nor can I say that I ever loved him as I ought to have done, or was suitable to the good usage I had from him, for he was a tender, kind, good-humoured man as any woman could desire; but his brother being so always in my sight, at least while we were in the country, was a continual snare to me; and I never was in bed with my husband, but I wished myself in the arms of his brother. And though his brother never offered me the least kindness that way after our marriage, but carried it just as a brother ought to do, yet it was impossible for me to do so to him; in short, I committed adultery

and incest with him every day in my desires, which, without doubt, was as effectually criminal.

Before my husband died his elder brother was married, and we being then removed to London, were written to by the old lady to come and be at the wedding. My husband went, but I pretended indisposition, so I stayed behind; for, in short, I could not bear the sight of his being given to another woman, though I knew I was never to have him myself.

I was now, as above, left loose to the world, and being still young and handsome, as everybody said of me, and I assure you I thought myself so, and with a tolerable fortune in my pocket, I put no small value upon myself. I was courted by several very considerable tradesmen, and particularly very warmly by one, a linen-draper, at whose house, after my husband's death, I took a lodging, his sister being my acquaintance. Here I had all the liberty and opportunity to be gay and appear in company that I could desire, my landlord's sister being one of the maddest, gayest things alive, and not so much mistress of her virtue as I thought at first she had been. She brought me into a world of wild company, and even brought home several persons, such as she liked well enough to gratify, to see her pretty widow. Now, as fame and fools make an assembly, I was here wonderfully caressed, had abundance of

admirers, and such as called themselves lovers; but I found not one fair proposal among them all. As for their common design, that I understood too well to be drawn into any more snares of that kind. The case was altered with me; I had money in my pocket, and had nothing to say to them. I had been tricked once by that cheat called love, but the game was over; I was resolved now to be married or nothing, and to be well married or not at all.

I loved the company, indeed, of men of mirth and wit, and was often entertained with such, as I was also with others; but I found by just observation, that the brightest men came upon the dullest errand; that is to say, the dullest as to what I aimed at. On the other hand, those who came with the best proposals were the dullest and most disagreeable part of the world. I was not averse to a tradesman; but then I would have a tradesman, forsooth, that was something of a gentleman too; that when my husband had a mind to carry me to the court, or to the play, he might become a sword, and look as like a gentleman as another man; and not like one that had the mark of his apron-strings upon his coat, or the mark of his hat upon his periwig; that should look as if he was set on to his sword, when his sword was put on to him, and that carried his trade in his countenance.

Well, at last I found this amphibious creature,

this land-water thing, called a gentleman-tradesman; and as a just plague upon my folly, I was catched in the very snare which, as I might say, I laid for myself.

This was a draper too, for though my comrade would have bargained for me with her brother, yet when they came to the point, it was, it seems, for a mistress, and I kept true to this notion, that a woman should never be kept for a mistress that had money to make herself a wife.

Thus my pride, not my principle, my money, not my virtue, kept me honest; though, as it proved, I found I had much better have been sold by my she-comrade to her brother than have sold myself as I did to a tradesman, that was a rake, gentleman, shopkeeper, and beggar, all together.

But I was hurried on (by my fancy to a gentleman) to ruin myself in the grossest manner that ever woman did; for my new husband coming to a lump of money at once, fell into such a profusion of expense, that all I had, and all he had, would not have held it out above one year.

He was very fond of me for about a quarter of a year, and what I got by that was, that I had the pleasure of seeing a great deal of my money spent upon myself. "Come, my dear," says he to me one day, "shall we go and take a turn into the country for a week?" "Ay, my dear," says I; "whither

would you go?" "I care not whither," says he, "but I have a mind to look like quality for a week; we 'll go to Oxford," says he. "How," says I, "shall we go? I am no horsewoman, and 't is too far for a coach." "Too far!" says he; "no place is too far for a coach-and-six. If I carry you out, you shall travel like a duchess." "Hum," says I, "my dear, 't is a frolic; but if you have a mind to it, I don't care." Well, the time was appointed; we had a rich coach, very good horses, a coachman, postillion, and two footmen in very good liveries; a gentleman on horseback, and a page with a feather in his hat upon another horse. The servants all called him my lord, and I was her honour the Countess, and thus we travelled to Oxford, and a pleasant journey we had; for, give him his due, not a beggar alive knew better how to be a lord than my husband. We saw all the rarities at Oxford; talked with two or three fellows of colleges about putting a nephew, that was left to his lordship's care, to the university, and of their being his tutors. We diverted ourselves with bantering several other poor scholars, with the hopes of being at least his lordship's chaplain, and putting on a scarf; and thus having lived like quality indeed, as to expense, we went away for Northampton, and, in a word, in about twelve days' ramble came home again, to the tune of about £93 expense.

Vanity is the perfection of a fop. My husband had this excellence, that he valued nothing of expense. As his history, you may be sure, has very little weight in it, 't is enough to tell you that in about two years and a quarter he broke, got into a sponging-house, being arrested in an action too heavy for him to give bail to, so he sent for me to come to him.

It was no surprise to me, for I had foreseen some time before that all was going to wreck, and had been taking care to reserve something, if I could, for myself; but when he sent for me, he behaved much better than I expected. He told me plainly he had played the fool, and suffered himself to be surprised, which he might have prevented; that now he foresaw he could not stand it, and therefore he would have me go home, and in the night take away everything I had in the house of any value, and secure it; and after that, he told me that if I could get away £100 or £200 in goods out of the shop, I should do it; "only," says he, "let me know nothing of it, neither what you take or whither you carry it; for as for me," says he, "I am resolved to get out of this house and be gone; and if you never hear of me more, my dear," says he, "I wish you well; I am only sorry for the injury I have done you." He said some very handsome things to me indeed at parting; for I told you he was a gentleman, and that was all

the benefit I had of his being so; that he used me very handsomely, even to the last, only spent all I had, and left me to rob the creditors for something to subsist on.

However, I did as he bade me, that you may be sure; and having thus taken my leave of him, I never saw him more, for he found means to break out of the bailiff's house that night, or the next; how, I knew not, for I could come at no knowledge of anything, more than this, that he came home about three o'clock in the morning, caused the rest of his goods to be removed into the Mint, and the shop to be shut up; and having raised what money he could, he got over to France, from whence I had one or two letters from him, and no more.

I did not see him when he came home, for he having given me such instructions as above, and I having made the best of my time, I had no more business back again at the house, not knowing but I might have been stopped there by the creditors; for a commission of bankrupt being soon after issued, they might have stopped me by orders from the commissioners. But my husband, having desperately got out from the bailiff's by letting himself down from almost the top of the house to the top of another building, and leaping from thence, which was almost two stories, and which was enough indeed to have broken his neck, he came home and got

away his goods before the creditors could come to seize; that is to say, before they could get out the commission, and be ready to send their officers to take possession.

My husband was so civil to me, for still I say he was much of a gentleman, that in the first letter he wrote me, he let me know where he had pawned twenty pieces of fine holland for £30, which were worth above £90, and enclosed me the token for the taking them up, paying the money, which I did, and made in time above £100 of them, having leisure to cut them, and sell them to private families, as opportunity offered.

However, with all this, and all that I had secured before, I found, upon casting things up, my case was very much altered, and my fortune much lessened; for, including the hollands and a parcel of fine muslins, which I carried off before, and some plate and other things, I found I could hardly muster up £500; and my condition was very odd, for though I had no child (I had had one by my gentleman draper, but it was buried), yet I was a widow bewitched, I had a husband and no husband, and I could not pretend to marry again, though I knew well enough my husband would never see England any more, if he lived fifty years. Thus, I say, I was limited from marriage, what offer soever might be made me; and I had not one friend to advise with

in the condition I was in, at least not one whom I could trust the secret of my circumstances to ; for if the commissioners were to have been informed where I was, I should have been fetched up, and all I had saved be taken away.

Upon these apprehensions, the first thing I did was to go quite out of my knowledge, and go by another name. This I did effectually, for I went into the Mint too, took lodgings in a very private place, dressed me up in the habit of a widow, and called myself Mrs. Flanders.

Here, however, I concealed myself, and though my new acquaintance knew nothing of me, yet I soon got a great deal of company about me ; and whether it be that women are scarce among the people that generally are to be found there, or that some consolations in the miseries of that place are more requisite than on other occasions, I soon found that an agreeable woman was exceedingly valuable among the sons of affliction there ; and that those that could not pay half-a-crown in the pound to their creditors, and run in debt at the sign of the Bull for their dinners, would yet find money for a supper, if they liked the woman.

However, I kept myself safe yet, though I began, like my Lord Rochester's mistress, that loved his company, but would not admit him further, to have the scandal of a whore without the joy ; and upon

this score, tired with the place, and with the company too, I began to think of removing.

It was indeed a subject of strange reflection to me, to see men in the most perplexed circumstances, who were reduced some degrees below being ruined, whose families were objects of their own terror and other people's charity, yet while a penny lasted, nay, even beyond it, endeavouring to drown their sorrow in their wickedness; heaping up more guilt upon themselves, labouring to forget former things, which now it was the proper time to remember, making more work for repentance, and sinning on, as a remedy for sin past.

But it is none of my talent to preach; these men were too wicked even for me. There was something horrid and absurd in their way of sinning, for it was all a force even upon themselves; they did not only act against conscience, but against nature, and nothing was more easy than to see how sighs would interrupt their songs, and paleness and anguish sit upon their brows, in spite of the forced smiles they put on; nay, sometimes it would break out at their very mouths, when they had parted with their money for a lewd treat or a wicked embrace. I have heard them, turning about, fetch a deep sigh, and cry, "What a dog am I! Well, Betty, my dear, I'll drink thy health, though;" meaning the honest wife, that perhaps had not a half-crown for herself and three or

four children. The next morning they were at their penitentials again, and perhaps the poor weeping wife comes over to him, either brings him some account of what his creditors are doing, and how she and the children are turned out of doors, or some other dreadful news; and this adds to his self-reproaches; but when he has thought and pored on it till he is almost mad, having no principles to support him, nothing within him or above him to comfort him, but finding it all darkness on every side, he flies to the same relief again, viz., to drink it away, debauch it away, and falling into company of men in just the same condition with himself, he repeats the crime, and thus he goes every day one step onward of his way to destruction.

I was not wicked enough for such fellows as these. Yet, on the contrary, I began to consider here very seriously what I had to do; how things stood with me, and what course I ought to take. I knew I had no friends, no, not one friend or relation in the world; and that little I had left apparently wasted, which when it was gone, I saw nothing but misery and starving was before me. Upon these considerations, I say, and filled with horror at the place I was in, I resolved to be gone.

I had made an acquaintance with a sober, good sort of a woman, who was a widow too, like me, but in better circumstances. Her husband had been a

captain of a ship, and having had the misfortune to be cast away coming home from the West Indies, was so reduced by the loss, that though he had saved his life then, it broke his heart, and killed him afterwards; and his widow being pursued by the creditors, was forced to take shelter in the Mint. She soon made things up with the help of friends, and was at liberty again; and finding that I rather was there to be concealed, than by any particular prosecutions, and finding also that I agreed with her, or rather she with me, in a just abhorrence of the place and of the company, she invited me to go home with her, till I could put myself in some posture of settling in the world to my mind; withal telling me, that it was ten to one but some good captain of a ship might take a fancy to me, and court me, in that part of the town where she lived.

I accepted of her offer, and was with her half a year, and should have been longer, but in that interval what she proposed to me happened to herself, and she married very much to her advantage. But whose fortune soever was upon the increase, mine seemed to be upon the wane, and I found nothing present, except two or three boatswains, or such fellows, but as for the commanders, they were generally of two sorts. 1. Such as, having good business, that is to say, a good ship, resolved not to marry, but with advantage. 2. Such as, being out of employ, wanted

a wife to help them to a ship; I mean (1) a wife who, having some money, could enable them to hold a good part of a ship themselves, so to encourage owners to come in; or (2) a wife who, if she had not money, had friends who were concerned in shipping, and so could help to put the young man into a good ship; and neither of these was my case, so I looked like one that was to lie on hand.

This knowledge I soon learned by experience, viz., that the state of things was altered as to matrimony, that marriages were here the consequences of politic schemes, for forming interests, carrying on business, and that love had no share, or but very little, in the matter.

That as my sister-in-law at Colchester had said, beauty, wit, manners, sense, good humour, good behaviour, education, virtue, piety, or any other qualification, whether of body or mind, had no power to recommend; that money only made a woman agreeable; that men chose mistresses indeed by the gust of their affection, and it was requisite for a whore to be handsome, well-shaped, have a good mien, and a graceful behaviour; but that for a wife, no deformity would shock the fancy, no ill qualities the judgment; the money was the thing; the portion was neither crooked, or monstrous, but the money was always agreeable, whatever the wife was.

On the other hand, as the market ran all on the

men's side, I found the women had lost the privilege of saying no; that it was a favour now for a woman to have the question asked, and if any young lady had so much arrogance as to counterfeit a negative, she never had the opportunity of denying twice, much less of recovering that false step, and accepting what she had seemed to decline. The men had such choice everywhere, that the case of the women was very unhappy; for they seemed to ply at every door, and if the man was by great chance refused at one house, he was sure to be received at the next.

Besides this, I observed that the men made no scruple to set themselves out and to go a-fortune-hunting, as they call it, when they had really no fortune themselves to demand it, or merit to deserve it; and they carried it so high, that a woman was scarce allowed to inquire after the character or estate of the person that pretended to her. This I had an example of in a young lady at the next house to me, and with whom I had contracted an intimacy; she was courted by a young captain, and though she had near £2000 to her fortune, she did but inquire of some of his neighbours about his character, his morals, or substance, and he took occasion at the next visit to let her know, truly, that he took it very ill, and that he should not give her the trouble of his visits any more. I heard of it, and I had begun my acquaintance with her. I went to see her upon it; she en-

zered into a close conversation with me about it, and unbosomed herself very freely. I perceived presently that though she thought herself very ill used, yet she had no power to resent it; that she was exceedingly piqued she had lost him, and particularly that another of less fortune had gained him.

I fortified her mind against such a meanness, as I called it; I told her, that as low as I was in the world, I would have despised a man that should think I ought to take him upon his own recommendation only; also I told her, that as she had a good fortune, she had no need to stoop to the disaster of the times; that it was enough that the men could insult us that had but little money, but if she suffered such an affront to pass upon her without resenting it, she would be rendered low prized upon all occasions; that a woman can never want an opportunity to be revenged of a man that has used her ill, and that there were ways enough to humble such a fellow as that, or else certainly women were the most unhappy creatures in the world.

She was very well pleased with the discourse, and told me seriously that she would be very glad to make him sensible of her resentment, and either to bring him on again or have the satisfaction of her revenge being as public as possible.

I told her, that if she would take my advice, I would tell her how she should obtain her wishes in

both those things; and that I would engage I would bring the man to her door again, and make him beg to be let in. She smiled at that, and soon let me see, that if he came to her door, her resentment was not so great to let him stand long there.

However, she listened very willingly to my offer of advice; so I told her that the first thing she ought to do was a piece of justice to herself, namely, that whereas he had reported among the ladies that he had left her, and pretended to give the advantage of the negative to himself, she should take care to have it well spread among the women, which she could not fail of an opportunity to do, that she had inquired into his circumstances, and found he was not the man he pretended to be. "Let them be told, too, madam," said I, "that he was not the man you expected, and that you thought it was not safe to meddle with him; that you heard he was of an ill temper, and that he boasted how he had used the women ill upon many occasions, and that particularly he was debauched in his morals," &c. The last of which, indeed, had some truth in it; but I did not find that she seemed to like him much the worse for that part.

She came most readily into all this, and immediately she went to work to find instruments. She had very little difficulty in the search, for telling her story in general to a couple of her gossips, it was the

chat of the tea-table all over that part of the town, and I met with it wherever I visited ; also, as it was known that I was acquainted with the young lady herself, my opinion was asked very often, and I confirmed it with all the necessary aggravations, and set out his character in the blackest colours ; and as a piece of secret intelligence, I added what the gossips knew nothing of, viz., that I had heard he was in very bad circumstances ; that he was under a necessity of a fortune to support his interest with the owners of the ship he commanded ; that his own part was not paid for, and if it was not paid quickly, his owners would put him out of the ship, and his chief mate was likely to command it, who offered to buy that part which the captain had promised to take.

I added, for I was heartily piqued at the rogue, as I called him, that I had heard a rumour too, that he had a wife alive at Plymouth, and another in the West Indies, a thing which they all knew was not very uncommon for such kind of gentlemen.

This worked as we both desired it, for presently the young lady at the next door, who had a father and mother that governed both her and her fortune, was shut up, and her father forbid him the house. Also in one place more the woman had the courage, however strange it was, to say no ; and he could try nowhere but he was reproached with his pride, and

that he pretended not to give the women leave to inquire into his character, and the like.

By this time he began to be sensible of his mistake; and seeing all the women on that side of the water alarmed, he went over to Ratcliff, and got access to some of the ladies there; but though the young women there too were, according to the fate of the day, pretty willing to be asked, yet such was his ill-luck, that his character followed him over the water; so that though he might have had wives enough, yet it did not happen among the women that had good fortunes, which was what he wanted.

But this was not all; she very ingeniously managed another thing herself, for she got a young gentleman, who was a relation, to come and visit her two or three times a week in a very fine chariot and good liveries, and her two agents, and I also, presently spread a report all over that this gentleman came to court her; that he was a gentleman of a thousand pounds a year, and that he was fallen in love with her, and that she was going to her aunt's in the city, because it was inconvenient for the gentleman to come to her with his coach to Rotherhithe, the streets being so narrow and difficult.

This took immediately. The captain was laughed at in all companies, and was ready to hang himself; he tried all the ways possible to come at her again, and wrote the most passionate letters to her in the

world ; and in short, by great application, obtained leave to wait on her again, as he said, only to clear his reputation.

At this meeting she had her full revenge of him ; for she told him, she wondered what he took her to be, that she should admit any man to a treaty of so much consequence as that of marriage without inquiring into his circumstances ; that if he thought she was to be huffed into wedlock, and that she was in the same circumstances which her neighbours might be in, viz., to take up with the first good Christian that came, he was mistaken ; that, in a word, his character was really bad, or he was very ill beholden to his neighbours ; and that unless he could clear up some points, in which she had justly been prejudiced, she had no more to say to him, but give him the satisfaction of knowing that she was not afraid to say no, either to him, or any man else.

With that she told him what she had heard, or rather raised herself by my means, of his character ; his not having paid for the part he pretended to own of the ship he commanded ; of the resolution of his owners to put him out of the command, and to put his mate in his stead ; and of the scandal raised on his morals ; his having been reproached with such-and-such women, and his having a wife at Plymouth, and another in the West Indies, and the like ; and she asked him whether she had not good reason, if

these things were not cleared up, to refuse him, and to insist upon having satisfaction in points so significant as they were.

He was so confounded at her discourse that he could not answer a word, and she began to believe that all was true, by his disorder, though she knew that she had been the raiser of these reports herself.

After some time he recovered a little, and from that time was the most humble, modest, and importunate man alive in his courtship.

She asked him if he thought she was so at her last shift that she could or ought to bear such treatment, and if he did not see that she did not want those who thought it worth their while to come farther to her than he did; meaning the gentleman whom she had brought to visit her by way of sham.

She brought him by these tricks to submit to all possible measures to satisfy her, as well of his circumstances as of his behaviour. He brought her undeniable evidence of his having paid for his part of the ship; he brought her certificates from his owners, that the report of their intending to remove him from the command of the ship was false and groundless; in short, he was quite the reverse of what he was before.

Thus I convinced her, that if the men made their advantage of our sex in the affair of marriage, upon the supposition of there being such a choice to be

had, and of the women being so easy, it was only owing to this, that the women wanted courage to maintain their ground, and that, according to my Lord Rochester —

> "A woman 's ne'er so ruined but she can
> Revenge herself on her undoer, man."

After these things this young lady played her part so well, that though she resolved to have him, and that indeed having him was the main bent of her design, yet she made his obtaining her to be to him the most difficult thing in the world; and this she did, not by a haughty, reserved carriage, but by a just policy, playing back upon him his own game; for as he pretended, by a kind of lofty carriage, to place himself above the occasion of a character, she broke with him upon that subject, and at the same time that she made him submit to all possible inquiry after his affairs, she apparently shut the door against his looking into her own.

It was enough to him to obtain her for a wife. As to what she had, she told him plainly, that as he knew her circumstances, it was but just she should know his; and though at the same time he had only known her circumstances by common fame, yet he had made so many protestations of his passion for her, that he could ask no more but her hand to his grand request, and the like ramble according to the

custom of lovers. In short, he left himself no room to ask any more questions about her estate, and she took the advantage of it, for she placed part of her fortune so in trustees, without letting him know anything of it, that it was quite out of his reach, and made him be very well contented with the rest.

It is true she was pretty well besides, that is to say, she had about £1400 in money, which she gave him ; and the other, after some time, she brought to light as a perquisite to herself, which he was to accept as a mighty favour, seeing, though it was not to be his, it might ease him in the article of her particular expenses ; and I must add, that by this conduct, the gentleman himself became not only more humble in his applications to her to obtain her, but also was much the more an obliging husband when he had her. I cannot but remind the ladies how much they place themselves below the common station of a wife, which, if I may be allowed not to be partial, is low enough already ; I say, they place themselves below their common station, and prepare their own mortifications, by their submitting so to be insulted by the men beforehand, which I confess I see no necessity of.

This relation may serve, therefore, to let the ladies see, that the advantage is not so much on the other side as the men think it is ; and that though it may be true, the men have but too much choice among

us, and that some women may be found who will dishonour themselves, be cheap, and too easy to come at, yet if they will have women worth having, they may find them as uncomeatable as ever, and that those that are otherwise have often such deficiencies, when had, as rather recommend the ladies that are difficult, than encourage the men to go on with their easy courtship, and expect wives equally valuable that will come at first call.

Nothing is more certain than that the ladies always gain of the men by keeping their ground, and letting their pretended lovers see they can resent being slighted, and that they are not afraid of saying no. They insult us mightily, with telling us of the number of women; that the wars, and the sea, and trade, and other incidents have carried the men so much away, that there is no proportion between the numbers of the sexes; but I am far from granting that the number of the women is so great, or the number of the men so small; but if they will have me tell the truth, the disadvantage of the women is a terrible scandal upon the men, and it lies here only; namely, that the age is so wicked, and the sex so debauched, that, in short, the number of such men as an honest woman ought to meddle with is small indeed, and it is but here and there that a man is to be found who is fit for an honest woman to venture upon.

But the consequence even of that too amounts to no more than this, that women ought to be the more nice: for how do we know the just character of the man that makes the offer? To say that the woman should be the more easy on this occasion, is to say we should be the forwarder to venture because of the greatness of the danger, which is very absurd.

On the contrary, the women have ten thousand times the more reason to be wary and backward, by how much the hazard of being betrayed is the greater; and would the ladies act the wary part, they would discover every cheat that offered; for, in short, the lives of very few men now-a-days will bear a character; and if the ladies do but make a little inquiry, they would soon be able to distinguish the men and deliver themselves. As for women that do not think their own safety worth their own thought, that, impatient of their present state, run into matrimony as a horse rushes into the battle, I can say nothing to them but this, that they are a sort of ladies that are to be prayed for among the rest of distempered people, and they look like people that venture their estates in a lottery where there is a hundred thousand blanks to one prize.

No man of common-sense will value a woman the less for not giving up herself at the first attack, or for not accepting his proposal without inquiring into his person or character; on the contrary, he must

think her the weakest of all creatures, as the rate of men now goes; in short, he must have a very contemptible opinion of her capacities, that having but one cast for her life, shall cast that life away at once, and make matrimony, like death, be a leap in the dark.

I would fain have the conduct of my sex a little regulated in this particular, which is the same thing in which, of all the parts of life, I think at this time we suffer most in; 't is nothing but lack of courage, the fear of not being married at all, and of that frightful state of life called an old maid. This, I say, is the woman's snare; but would the ladies once but get above that fear, and manage rightly, they would more certainly avoid it by standing their ground, in a case so absolutely necessary to their felicity, than by exposing themselves as they do; and if they did not marry so soon, they would make themselves amends by marrying safer. She is always married too soon who gets a bad husband, and she is never married too late who gets a good one; in a word, there is no woman, deformity or lost reputation excepted, but if she manages well may be married safely one time or other; but if she precipitates herself, it is ten thousand to one but she is undone.

But I come now to my own case, in which there was at this time no little nicety. The circumstances I was in made the offer of a good husband the most

necessary thing in the world to me, but I found soon that to be made cheap and easy was not the way. It soon began to be found that the widow had no fortune, and to say this was to say all that was ill of me, being well-bred, handsome, witty, modest, and agreeable; all which I had allowed to my character, whether justly or no is not to the purpose; I say, all these would not do without the dross. In short, the widow, they said, had no money.

I resolved, therefore, that it was necessary to change my station, and make a new appearance in some other place, and even to pass by another name if I found occasion.

I communicated my thoughts to my intimate friend, the captain's lady, whom I had so faithfully served in her case with the captain, and who was as ready to serve me in the same kind as I could desire. I made no scruple to lay my circumstances open to her; my stock was but low, for I had made but about £540 at the close of my last affair, and I had wasted some of that; however, I had about £460 left, a great many very rich clothes, a gold watch, and some jewels, though of no extraordinary value, and about £30 or £40 left in linen not disposed of.

My dear and faithful friend, the captain's wife, was so sensible of the service I had done her in the affair above, that she was not only a steady friend to me, but, knowing my circumstances, she frequently

made me presents as money came into her hands, such as fully amounted to a maintenance, so that I spent none of my own; and at last she made this unhappy proposal to me, viz., that as we had observed, as above, how the men made no scruple to set themselves out as persons meriting a woman of fortune of their own, it was but just to deal with them in their own way, and if it was possible, to deceive the deceiver.

The captain's lady, in short, put this project into my head, and told me if I would be ruled by her I should certainly get a husband of fortune, without leaving him any room to reproach me with want of my own. I told her that I would give up myself wholly to her directions, and that I would have neither tongue to speak or feet to step in that affair but as she should direct me, depending that she would extricate me out of every difficulty that she brought me into, which she said she would answer for.

The first step she put me upon was to call her cousin, and go to a relation's house of hers in the country, where she directed me, and where she brought her husband to visit me; and calling me cousin, she worked matters so about, that her husband and she together invited me most passionately to come to town and live with them, for they now lived in a quite different place from where they were

before. In the next place, she tells her husband that I had at least £1500 fortune, and that I was like to have a great deal more.

It was enough to tell her husband this; there needed nothing on my side. I was but to sit still and wait the event, for it presently went all over the neighbourhood that the young widow at Captain ——'s was a fortune, that she had at least £1500, and perhaps a great deal more, and that the captain said so; and if the captain was asked at any time about me, he made no scruple to affirm it, though he knew not one word of the matter other than that his wife had told him so; and in this he thought no harm, for he really believed it to be so. With the reputation of this fortune, I presently found myself blessed with admirers enough (and that I had my choice of men), as they said they were, which, by the way, confirms what I was saying before. This being my case, I, who had a subtle game to play, had nothing now to do but to single out from them all the properest man that might be for my purpose; that is to say, the man who was most likely to depend upon the hearsay of fortune, and not inquire too far into the particulars; and unless I did this I did nothing, for my case would not bear much inquiry.

I picked out my man without much difficulty, by the judgment I made of his way of courting me. I had let him run on with his protestations that he

loved me above all the world; that if I would make him happy, that was enough; all which I knew was upon supposition that I was very rich, though I never told him a word of it myself.

This was my man; but I was to try him to the bottom; and indeed in that consisted my safety, for if he balked, I knew I was undone, as surely as he was undone if he took me; and if I did not make some scruple about his fortune, it was the way to lead him to raise some about mine; and first, therefore, I pretended on all occasions to doubt his sincerity, and told him perhaps he only courted me for my fortune. He stopped my mouth in that part with the thunder of his protestations as above, but still I pretended to doubt.

One morning he pulls off his diamond ring, and writes upon the glass of the sash in my chamber this line: —

"You I love, and you alone."

I read it, and asked him to lend me the ring, with which I wrote under it, thus: —

"And so in love says every one."

He takes his ring again, and writes another line thus: —

"Virtue alone is an estate."

I borrowed it again, and I wrote under it: —

"But money 's virtue, gold is fate."

He coloured as red as fire to see me turn so quick upon him, and in a kind of rage told me he would conquer me, and wrote again thus: —

"I scorn your gold, and yet I love."

I ventured all upon the last cast of poetry, as you 'll see, for I wrote boldly under his last: —

"I 'm poor; let 's see how kind you 'll prove."

This was a sad truth to me; whether he believed me or no I could not tell; I supposed then that he did not. However, he flew to me, took me in his arms, and, kissing me very eagerly, and with the greatest passion imaginable, he held me fast till he called for a pen and ink, and told me he could not wait the tedious writing on a glass, but pulling out a piece of paper, he began and wrote again: —

"Be mine with all your poverty."

I took his pen, and followed immediately, thus: —

"Yet secretly you hope I lie."

He told me that was unkind, because it was not just, and that I put him upon contradicting me, which did not consist with good manners, and, therefore, since I had insensibly drawn him into this poetical scribble, he begged I would not oblige him to break it off. So he writes again: —

"Let love alone be our debate."

I wrote again : —

"She loves enough that does not hate."

This he took for a favour, and so laid down the cudgels, that is to say, the pen ; I say, he took it for a favour, and a mighty one it was, if he had known all. However, he took it as I meant it, that is, to let him think I was inclined to go on with him, as indeed I had reason to do, for he was the best-humoured merry sort of a fellow that I ever met with ; and I often reflected how doubly criminal it was to deceive such a man ; but that necessity, which pressed me to a settlement suitable to my condition, was my authority for it ; and certainly his affection to me, and the goodness of his temper, however they might argue against using him ill, yet they strongly argued to me that he would better take the disappointment than some fiery-tempered wretch, who might have nothing to recommend him but those passions which would serve only to make a woman miserable.

Besides, though I had jested with him (as he supposed it) so often about my poverty, yet when he found it to be true, he had foreclosed all manner of objection, seeing, whether he was in jest or in earnest, he had declared he took me without any regard to my portion, and, whether I was in jest or in earnest, I had declared myself to be very poor ; so that, in

a word, I had him fast both ways; and though he might say afterwards he was cheated, yet he could never say that I had cheated him.

He pursued me close after this, and as I saw there was no need to fear losing him, I played the indifferent part with him longer than prudence might otherwise have dictated to me; but I considered how much this caution and indifference would give me the advantage over him when I should come to own my circumstances to him; and I managed it the more warily, because I found he inferred from thence that I either had the more money or the more judgment, and would not venture at all.

I took the freedom one day to tell him that it was true I had received the compliment of a lover from him, namely, that he would take me without inquiring into my fortune, and I would make him a suitable return in this, viz., that I would make as little inquiry into his as consisted with reason, but I hoped he would allow me to ask some questions, which he should answer or not as he thought fit; one of these questions related to our manner of living, and the place where, because I had heard he had a great plantation in Virginia, and I told him I did not care to be transported.

He began from this discourse to let me voluntarily into all his affairs, and to tell me in a frank, open way all his circumstances, by which I found he was

very well to pass in the world; but that great part of his estate consisted of three plantations, which he had in Virginia, which brought him in a very good income of about £300 a year, but that if he was to live upon them, would bring him in four times as much. "Very well," thought I; "you shall carry me thither, then, as soon as you please, though I won't tell you so beforehand."

I jested with him about the figure he would make in Virginia; but I found he would do anything I desired, so I turned my tale. I told him I had good reason not to desire to go there to live; because if his plantations were worth so much there, I had not a fortune suitable to a gentleman of £1200 a year, as he said his estate would be.

He replied, he did not ask what my fortune was; he had told me from the beginning he would not, and he would be as good as his word; but whatever it was, he assured me he would never desire me to go to Virginia with him, or go thither himself without me, unless I made it my choice.

All this, you may be sure, was as I wished, and indeed nothing could have happened more perfectly agreeable. I carried it on as far as this with a sort of indifferency that he often wondered at, and I mention it the rather to intimate again to the ladies that nothing but want of courage for such an indifferency makes our sex so cheap, and prepares them

to be ill used as they are; would they venture the loss of a pretending fop now and then, who carries it high upon the point of his own merit, they would certainly be slighted less and courted more. Had I discovered really what my great fortune was, and that in all I had not full £500 when he expected £1500, yet I hooked him so fast, and played him so long, that I was satisfied he would have had me in my worst circumstances; and indeed it was less a surprise to him when he learnt the truth than it would have been, because having not the least blame to lay on me, who had carried it with an air of indifference to the last, he could not say one word, except that indeed he thought it had been more, but that, if it had been less, he did not repent his bargain; only that he should not be able to maintain me so well as he intended.

In short, we were married, and very happily married on my side, I assure you, as to the man; for he was the best-humoured man that ever woman had, but his circumstances were not so good as I imagined, as, on the other hand, he had not bettered himself so much as he expected.

When we were married, I was shrewdly put to it to bring him that little stock I had, and to let him see it was no more; but there was a necessity for it, so I took my opportunity one day when we were alone, to enter into a short dialogue with him about

it. "My dear," said I, "we have been married a fortnight; is it not time to let you know whether you have got a wife with something or with nothing?" "Your own time for that, my dear," says he; "I am satisfied I have got the wife I love; I have not troubled you much," says he, "with my inquiry after it."

"That 's true," said I, "but I have a great difficulty about it, which I scarce know how to manage." "What 's that, my dear?" says he. "Why," says I, "'t is a little hard upon me, and 't is harder upon you; I am told that Captain ——" (meaning my friend's husband) "has told you I had a great deal more than ever I pretended to have, and I am sure I never employed him so to do."

"Well," says he, "Captain —— may have told me so, but what then? If you have not so much, that may lie at his door, but you never told me what you had, so I have no reason to blame you if you have nothing at all."

"That is so just," said I, "and so generous, that it makes my having but a little a double affliction to me."

"The less you have, my dear," says he, "the worse for us both; but I hope your affliction is not caused for fear I should be unkind to you for want of a portion. No, no, if you have nothing, tell me plainly; I may perhaps tell the captain he

has cheated me, but I can never say you have, for did not you give it under your hand that you was poor? and so I ought to expect you to be."

"Well," said I, "my dear, I am glad I have not been concerned in deceiving you before marriage. If I deceive you since, 't is ne'er the worse; that I am poor, 't is too true, but not so poor as to have nothing neither;" so I pulled out some bank bills and gave him about £160. "There is something, my dear," says I, "and not quite all neither."

I had brought him so near to expecting nothing, by what I had said before, that the money, though the sum was small in itself, was doubly welcome; he owned it was more than he looked for, and that he did not question by my discourse to him, but that my fine clothes, gold watch, and a diamond ring or two, had been all my fortune.

I let him please himself with that £160 two or three days, and then having been abroad that day, and as if I had been to fetch it, I brought him £100 more home in gold, and told him there was a little more portion for him; and, in short, in about a week more, I brought him £180 more, and about £60 in linen, which I made him believe I had been obliged to take with the £100 which I gave him in gold, as a composition for a debt of £600, being little more than five shillings in the pound, and overvalued too.

"And now, my dear," says I to him, "I am very

sorry to tell you that I have given you my whole fortune." I added, that if the person who had my £600 had not abused me, I had been worth £1000 to him, but that as it was, I had been faithful, and reserved nothing to myself, but if it had been more he should have had it.

He was so obliged by the manner, and so pleased with the sum, for he had been in a terrible fright lest it had been nothing at all, that he accepted it very thankfully. And thus I got over the fraud of passing for a fortune without money, and cheating a man into marrying me on pretence of it; which, by the way, I take to be one of the most dangerous steps a woman can take, and in which she runs the most hazards of being ill-used afterwards.

My husband, to give him his due, was a man of infinite good nature, but he was no fool; and finding his income not suited to the manner of living which he had intended, if I had brought him what he expected, and being under a disappointment in his return of his plantations in Virginia, he discovered many times his inclination of going over to Virginia, to live upon his own; and often would be magnifying the way of living there, how cheap, how plentiful, how pleasant, and the like.

I began presently to understand his meaning, and I took him up very plainly one morning, and told him that I did so; that I found his estate turned to

no account at this distance, compared to what it would do if he lived upon the spot, and that I found he had a mind to go and live there; that I was sensible he had been disappointed in a wife, and that finding his expectations not answered that way, I could do no less, to make him amends, than tell him that I was very willing to go to Virginia with him and live there.

He said a thousand kind things to me upon the subject of my making such a proposal to him. He told me that though he was disappointed in his expectations of a fortune, he was not disappointed in a wife, and that I was all to him that a wife could be, but that this offer was so kind, that it was more than he could express.

To bring the story short, we agreed to go. He told me that he had a very good house there, well furnished; that his mother lived in it, and one sister, which was all the relations he had; that as soon as he came there, they would remove to another house, which was her own for life, and his after her decease; so that I should have all the house to myself; and I found it all exactly as he said.

We put on board the ship which we went in a large quantity of good furniture for our house, with stores of linen and other necessaries, and a good cargo for sale, and away we went.

To give an account of the manner of our voyage,

which was long and full of dangers, is out of my way; I kept no journal, neither did my husband. All that I can say is, that after a terrible passage, frighted twice with dreadful storms, and once with what was still more terrible, I mean a pirate, who came on board, and took away almost all our provisions; and which would have been beyond all to me, they had once taken my husband, but by entreaties were prevailed with to leave him; — I say, after all these terrible things, we arrived in York River in Virginia, and coming to our plantation, we were received with all the tenderness and affection, by my husband's mother, that could be expressed.

We lived here all together, my mother-in-law, at my entreaty, continuing in the house, for she was too kind a mother to be parted with; my husband likewise continued the same at first, and I thought myself the happiest creature alive, when an odd and surprising event put an end to all that felicity in a moment, and rendered my condition the most uncomfortable in the world.

My mother was a mighty cheerful, good-humoured old woman — I may call her so, for her son was above thirty; I say she was very pleasant, good company, and used to entertain me, in particular, with abundance of stories to divert me, as well of the country we were in as of the people.

Among the rest, she often told me how the greatest

part of the inhabitants of that colony came thither in very indifferent circumstances from England; that, generally speaking, they were of two sorts; either, first, such as were brought over by masters of ships to be sold as servants; or, second, such as are transported after having been found guilty of crimes punishable with death.

"When they come here," says she, "we make no difference; the planters buy them, and they work together in the field, till their time is out. When 't is expired," said she, "they have encouragement given them to plant for themselves; for they have a certain number of acres of land allotted them by the country, and they go to work to clear and cure the land, and then to plant it with tobacco and corn for their own use; and as the merchants will trust them with tools and necessaries, upon the credit of their crop before it is grown, so they again plant every year a little more than the year before, and so buy whatever they want with the crop that is before them. Hence, child," says she, "many a Newgate bird becomes a great man, and we have," continued she, "several justices of the peace, officers of the trained bands, and magistrates of the towns they live in, that have been burnt in the hand."

She was going on with that part of the story, when her own part in it interrupted her, and with a great deal of good-humoured confidence, she told me

she was one of the second sort of inhabitants herself; that she came away openly, having ventured too far in a particular case, so that she was become a criminal; "And here's the mark of it, child," says she, and showed me a very fine white arm and hand, but branded in the inside of the hand, as in such cases it must be.

This story was very moving to me, but my mother, smiling, said, "You need not think such a thing strange, daughter, for some of the best men in the country are burnt in the hand, and they are not ashamed to own it. There's Major ——," says she, "he was an eminent pickpocket; there's Justice Ba——r, was a shoplifter, and both of them were burnt in the hand; and I could name you several such as they are."

We had frequent discourses of this kind, and abundance of instances she gave me of the like. After some time, as she was telling some stories of one that was transported but a few weeks ago, I began in an intimate kind of way to ask her to tell me something of her own story, which she did with the utmost plainness and sincerity; how she had fallen into very ill company in London in her young days, occasioned by her mother sending her frequently to carry victuals to a kinswoman of hers who was a prisoner in Newgate, in a miserable starving condition, who was afterwards condemned to die, but

having got respite by pleading her belly, perished afterwards in the prison.

Here my mother-in-law ran out in a long account of the wicked practices in that dreadful place. "And, child," says my mother, "perhaps you may know little of it, or, it may be, have heard nothing about it; but depend upon it," says she, "we all know here that there are more thieves and rogues made by that one prison of Newgate than by all the clubs and societies of villains in the nation; 't is that cursed place," says my mother, "that half peoples this colony."

Here she went on with her own story so long, and in so particular a manner, that I began to be very uneasy; but coming to one particular that required telling her name, I thought I should have sunk down in the place. She perceived I was out of order, and asked me if I was not well, and what ailed me. I told her I was so affected with the melancholy story she had told that it had overcome me, and I begged of her to talk no more of it. "Why, my dear," says she very kindly, "what need these things trouble you? These passages were long before your time, and they give me no trouble at all now; nay, I look back on them with a particular satisfaction, as they have been a means to bring me to this place." Then she went on to tell me how she fell into a good family, where behaving herself well, and her mistress

dying, her master married her, by whom she had my husband and his sister, and that by her diligence and good management after her husband's death, she had improved the plantations to such a degree as they then were, so that most of the estate was of her getting, not of her husband's, for she had been a widow upwards of sixteen years.

I heard this part of the story with very little attention, because I wanted much to retire and give vent to my passions; and let any one judge what must be the anguish of my mind when I came to reflect that this was certainly no more or less than my own mother, and that I had now had two children, and was big with another by my own brother, and lay with him still every night.

I was now the most unhappy of all women in the world. Oh! had the story never been told me, all had been well; it had been no crime to have lain with my husband, if I had known nothing of it.

I had now such a load on my mind that it kept me perpetually waking; to reveal it I could not find would be to any purpose, and yet to conceal it would be next to impossible; nay, I did not doubt but I should talk in my sleep, and tell my husband of it whether I would or no. If I discovered it, the least thing I could expect was to lose my husband, for he was too nice and too honest a man to have continued my husband after he had known I had

been his sister; so that I was perplexed to the last degree.

I leave it to any man to judge what difficulties presented to my view. I was away from my native country, at a distance prodigious, and the return to me unpassable. I lived very well, but in a circumstance unsufferable in itself. If I had discovered myself to my mother, it might be difficult to convince her of the particulars, and I had no way to prove them. On the other hand, if she had questioned or doubted me, I had been undone, for the bare suggestion would have immediately separated me from my husband, without gaining my mother or him; so that between the surprise on one hand, and the uncertainty on the other, I had been sure to be undone.

In the meantime, as I was but too sure of the fact, I lived therefore in open avowed incest and whoredom, and all under the appearance of an honest wife; and though I was not much touched with the crime of it, yet the action had something in it shocking to nature, and made my husband even nauseous to me. However, upon the most sedate consideration, I resolved that it was absolutely necessary to conceal it all, and not make the least discovery of it either to mother or husband; and thus I lived with the greatest pressure imaginable for three years more.

During this time my mother used to be frequently telling me old stories of her former adventures,

which, however, were no ways pleasant to me; for by it, though she did not tell it me in plain terms, yet I could understand, joined with what I heard myself, of my first tutors, that in her younger days she had been whore and thief; but I verily believe she had lived to repent sincerely of both, and that she was then a very pious, sober, and religious woman.

Well, let her life have been what it would then, it was certain that my life was very uneasy to me; for I lived, as I have said, but in the worst sort of whoredom, and as I could expect no good of it, so really no good issue came of it, and all my seeming prosperity wore off, and ended in misery and destruction. It was some time, indeed, before it came to this, for everything went wrong with us afterwards, and that which was worse, my husband grew strangely altered, froward, jealous, and unkind, and I was as impatient of bearing his carriage, as the carriage was unreasonable and unjust. These things proceeded so far, and we came at last to be in such ill terms with one another, that I claimed a promise of him, which he entered willingly into with me when I consented to come from England with him, viz., that if I did not like to live there, I should come away to England again when I pleased, giving him a year's warning to settle his affairs.

I say, I now claimed this promise of him, and I much confess I did it not in the most obliging terms

that could be neither; but I insisted that he treated me ill, that I was remote from my friends, and could do myself no justice, and that he was jealous without cause, my conversation having been unblamable, and he having no pretence for it, and that to remove to England would take away all occasion from him.

I insisted so peremptorily upon it, that he could not avoid coming to a point, either to keep his word with me or to break it; and this, notwithstanding he used all the skill he was master of, and employed his mother and other agents to prevail with me to alter my resolutions; indeed, the bottom of the thing lay at my heart, and that made all his endeavours fruitless, for my heart was alienated from him. I loathed the thoughts of bedding with him, and used a thousand pretences of illness and humour to prevent his touching me, fearing nothing more than to be with child again, which to be sure would have prevented, or at least delayed, my going over to England.

However, at last I put him so out of humour that he took up a rash and fatal resolution, that, in short, I should not go to England; that though he had promised me, yet it was an unreasonable thing; that it would be ruinous to his affairs, would unhinge his whole family, and be next to an undoing him in the world; that therefore I ought not to desire it of him, and that no wife in the world that valued

her family and her husband's prosperity, would insist upon such a thing.

This plunged me again, for when I considered the thing calmly, and took my husband as he really was, a diligent, careful man in the main, and that he knew nothing of the dreadful circumstances that he was in, I could not but confess to myself that my proposal was very unreasonable, and what no wife that had the good of her family at heart would have desired.

But my discontents were of another nature; I looked upon him no longer as a husband, but as a near relation, the son of my own mother, and I resolved somehow or other to be clear of him, but which way I did not know.

It is said by the ill-natured world, of our sex, that if we are set on a thing, it is impossible to turn us from our resolutions; in short, I never ceased poring upon the means to bring to pass my voyage, and came that length with my husband at last, as to propose going without him. This provoked him to the last degree, and he called me not only an unkind wife, but an unnatural mother, and asked me how I could entertain such a thought without horror, as that of leaving my two children (for one was dead) without a mother, and never to see them more. It was true, had things been right, I should not have done it, but now, it was my real desire never to see

them, or him either, any more; and as to the charge of unnatural, I could easily answer it to myself, while I knew that the whole relation was unnatural in the highest degree.

However, there was no bringing my husband to anything; he would neither go with me, or let me go without him, and it was out of my power to stir without his consent, as any one that is acquainted with the constitution of that country knows very well.

We had many family quarrels about it, and they began to grow up to a dangerous height; for as I was quite estranged from him in affection, so I took no heed to my words, but sometimes gave him language that was provoking; in short, I strove all I could to bring him to a parting with me, which was what above all things I desired most.

He took my carriage very ill, and indeed he might well do so, for at last I refused to bed with him, and carrying on the breach upon all occasions to extremity, he told me once he thought I was mad, and if I did not alter my conduct, he would put me under cure; that is to say, into a madhouse. I told him he should find I was far enough from mad, and that it was not in his power, or any other villain's, to murder me. I confess at the same time I was heartily frighted at his thoughts of putting me into a madhouse, which would at once have destroyed all

the possibility of bringing the truth out; for that then no one would have given credit to a word of it.

This therefore brought me to a resolution, whatever came of it, to lay open my whole case; but which way to do it, or to whom, was an inextricable difficulty, when another quarrel with my husband happened, which came up to such an extreme as almost pushed me on to tell it him all to his face; but though I kept it in so as not to come to the particulars, I spoke so much as put him into the utmost confusion, and in the end brought out the whole story.

He began with a calm expostulation upon my being so resolute to go to England; I defended it, and one hard word bringing on another, as is usual in all family strife, he told me I did not treat him as if he was my husband, or talk of my children as if I was a mother; and, in short, that I did not deserve to be used as a wife; that he had used all the fair means possible with me; that he had argued with all the kindness and calmness that a husband or a Christian ought to do, and that I made him such a vile return, that I treated him rather like a dog than a man, and rather like the most contemptible stranger than a husband; that he was very loth to use violence with me, but that, in short, he saw a necessity of it now, and that for the future he

should be obliged to take such measures as should reduce me to my duty.

My blood was now fired to the utmost, and nothing could appear more provoked. I told him, for his fair means and his foul, they were equally contemned by me; that for my going to England, I was resolved on it, come what would; and that as to treating him not like a husband, and not showing myself a mother to my children, there might be something more in it than he understood at present; but I thought fit to tell him thus much, that he neither was my lawful husband, nor they lawful children, and that I had reason to regard neither of them more than I did.

I confess I was moved to pity him when I spoke it, for he turned pale as death, and stood mute as one thunderstruck, and once or twice I thought he would have fainted; in short, it put him in a fit something like an apoplex; he trembled, a sweat or dew ran off his face, and yet he was cold as a clod, so that I was forced to fetch something to keep life in him. When he recovered of that, he grew sick and vomited, and in a little after was put to bed, and the next morning was in a violent fever.

However, it went off again, and he recovered, though but slowly, and when he came to be a little better, he told me I had given him a mortal wound with my tongue, and he had only one thing to ask

before he desired an explanation. I interrupted him, and told him I was sorry I had gone so far, since I saw what disorder it put him into, but I desired him not to talk to me of explanations, for that would but make things worse.

This heightened his impatience, and, indeed, perplexed him beyond all bearing; for now he began to suspect that there was some mystery yet unfolded, but could not make the least guess at it; all that ran in his brain was, that I had another husband alive, but I assured him there was not the least of that in it; indeed, as to my other husband, he was effectually dead to me, and had told me I should look on him as such, so I had not the least uneasiness on that score.

But now I found the thing too far gone to conceal it much longer, and my husband himself gave me an opportunity to ease myself of the secret, much to my satisfaction. He had laboured with me three or four weeks, but to no purpose, only to tell him whether I had spoken those words only to put him in a passion, or whether there was anything of truth in the bottom of them. But I continued inflexible, and would explain nothing, unless he would first consent to my going to England, which he would never do, he said, while he lived; on the other hand, I said it was in my power to make him willing when I pleased — nay, to make him entreat me to go; and this increased

his curiosity, and made him importunate to the highest degree.

At length he tells all this story to his mother, and sets her upon me to get it out of me, and she used her utmost skill indeed; but I put her to a full stop at once, by telling her that the mystery of the whole matter lay in herself; that it was my respect to her had made me conceal it; and that, in short, I could go no further, and therefore conjured her not to insist upon it.

She was struck dumb at this suggestion, and could not tell what to say or to think; but laying aside the supposition as a policy of mine, continued her importunity on account of her son, and, if possible, to make up the breach between us two. As to that, I told her that it was indeed a good design in her, but that it was impossible to be done; and that if I should reveal to her the truth of what she desired, she would grant it to be impossible, and cease to desire it. At last I seemed to be prevailed on by her importunity, and told her I dare trust her with a secret of the greatest importance, and she would soon see that this was so, and that I would consent to lodge it in her breast, if she would engage solemnly not to acquaint her son with it without my consent.

She was long in promising this part, but rather than not come at the main secret she agreed to that

too, and after a great many other preliminaries, I began, and told her the whole story. First I told her how much she was concerned in all the unhappy breach which had happened between her son and me, by telling me her own story and her London name; and that the surprise she saw I was in was upon that occasion. Then I told her my own story, and my name, and assured her, by such other tokens as she could not deny, that I was no other, nor more or less, than her own child, her daughter, born of her body in Newgate; the same that had saved her from the gallows by being in her belly, and that she left in such-and-such hands when she was transported.

It is impossible to express the astonishment she was in; she was not inclined to believe the story, or to remember the particulars; for she immediately foresaw the confusion that must follow in the family upon it; but everything concurred so exactly with the stories she had told me of herself, and which, if she had not told me, she would perhaps have been content to have denied, that she had stopped her own mouth, and she had nothing to do but take me about the neck and kiss me, and cry most vehemently over me, without speaking one word for a long time together. At last she broke out: "Unhappy child!" says she, "what miserable chance could bring thee hither? and in the arms of my son, too! Dreadful girl!" says she, "why, we are all undone! Married

to thy own brother! three children, and two alive, all of the same flesh and blood! My son and my daughter lying together as husband and wife! all confusion and distraction! Miserable family! what will become of us? what is to be said? what is to be done?" And thus she ran on a great while; nor had I any power to speak, or if I had, did I know what to say, for every word wounded me to the soul. With this kind of amazement we parted for the first time, though my mother was more surprised than I was, because it was more news to her than to me. However, she promised again that she would say nothing of it to her son till we had talked of it again.

It was not long, you may be sure, before we had a second conference upon the same subject; when, as if she had been willing to forget the story she had told me of herself, or to suppose that I had forgot some of the particulars, she began to tell them with alterations and omissions; but I refreshed her memory in many things which I supposed she had forgot, and then came in so opportunely with the whole history, that it was impossible for her to go from it; and then she fell into her rhapsodies again, and exclamations at the severity of her misfortunes. When these things were a little over with her, we fell into a close debate about what should be first done before we gave an account of the matter to my husband.

But to what purpose could be all our consultations? We could neither of us see our way through it, or how it could be safe to open such a scene to him. It was impossible to make any judgment, or give any guess at what temper he would receive it in, or what measures he would take upon it; and if he should have so little government of himself as to make it public, we easily foresaw that it would be the ruin of the whole family; and if at last he should take the advantage the law would give him, he might put me away with disdain, and leave me to sue for the little portion that I had, and perhaps waste it all in the suit, and then be a beggar; and thus I should see him, perhaps, in the arms of another wife in a few months, and be myself the most miserable creature alive.

My mother was as sensible of this as I; and, upon the whole, we knew not what to do. After some time we came to more sober resolutions, but then it was with this misfortune too, that my mother's opinion and mine were quite different from one another, and indeed inconsistent with one another; for my mother's opinion was, that I should bury the whole thing entirely, and continue to live with him as my husband, till some other event should make the discovery of it more convenient; and that in the meantime she would endeavour to reconcile us together again, and restore our mutual comfort and

family peace; that we might lie as we used to do together, and so let the whole matter remain a secret as close as death; "for, child," says she, "we are both undone if it comes out."

To encourage me to this, she promised to make me easy in my circumstances, and to leave me what she could at her death, secured for me separately from my husband; so that if it should come out afterwards, I should be able to stand on my own feet, and procure justice too from him.

This proposal did not agree with my judgment, though it was very fair and kind in my mother; but my thoughts ran quite another way.

As to keeping the thing in our own breasts, and letting it all remain as it was, I told her it was impossible; and I asked her how she could think I could bear the thoughts of lying with my own brother. In the next place I told her that her being alive was the only support of the discovery, and that while she owned me for her child, and saw reason to be satisfied that I was so, nobody else would doubt it; but that if she should die before the discovery, I should be taken for an impudent creature that had forged such a thing to go away from my husband, or should be counted crazed and distracted. Then I told her how he had threatened already to put me into a madhouse, and what concern I had been in about it, and how that was the

thing that drove me to the necessity of discovering it to her as I had done.

From all which I told her, that I had, on the most serious reflections I was able to make in the case, come to this resolution, which I hoped she would like, as a medium between both, viz., that she should use her endeavours with her son to give me leave to go for England, as I had desired, and to furnish me with a sufficient sum of money, either in goods along with me, or in bills for my support there, all along suggesting that he might one time or other think it proper to come over to me.

That when I was gone, she should then, in cold blood, discover the case to him gradually, and as her own discretion should guide; so that he might not be surprised with it, and fly out into any passions and excesses; and that she should concern herself to prevent his slighting the children, or marrying again, unless he had a certain account of my being dead.

This was my scheme, and my reasons were good; I was really alienated from him in the consequence of these things; indeed I mortally hated him as a husband, and it was impossible to remove that riveted aversion I had to him; at the same time, it being an unlawful, incestuous living, added to that aversion, and everything added to make cohabiting

with him the most nauseous thing to me in the world; and I think verily it was come to such a height, that I could almost as willingly have embraced a dog, as have let him offer anything of that kind to me, for which reason I could not bear the thoughts of coming between the sheets with him. I cannot say that I was right in carrying it such a length, while at the same time I did not resolve to discover the thing to him; but I am giving an account of what was, not of what ought or ought not to be.

In this directly opposite opinion to one another my mother and I continued a long time, and it was impossible to reconcile our judgments; many disputes we had about it, but we could never either of us yield our own, or bring over the other.

I insisted on my aversion to lying with my own brother, and she insisted upon its being impossible to bring him to consent to my going to England; and in this uncertainty we continued, not differing so as to quarrel, or anything like it, but so as not to be able to resolve what we should do to make up that terrible breach.

At last I resolved on a desperate course, and told my mother my resolution, viz., that, in short, I would tell him of it myself. My mother was frighted to the last degree at the very thoughts of it; but I bid her be easy, told her I would do it gradually and

softly, and with all the art and good humour I was mistress of, and time it also as well as I could, taking him in good humour too. I told her I did not question but if I could be hypocrite enough to feign more affection to him than I really had, I should succeed in all my design, and we might part by consent, and with a good agreement, for I might love him well enough for a brother, though I could not for a husband.

All this while he lay at my mother to find out, if possible, what was the meaning of that dreadful expression of mine, as he called it, which I mentioned before; namely, that I was not his lawful wife, nor my children his legal children. My mother put him off, told him she could bring me to no explanations, but found there was something that disturbed me very much, and she hoped she should get it out of me in time, and in the meantime recommended to him earnestly to use me more tenderly, and win me with his usual good carriage; told him of his terrifying and affrighting me with his threats of sending me to a madhouse and the like, and advised him not to make a woman desperate on any account whatever.

He promised her to soften his behaviour, and bid her assure me that he loved me as well as ever, and that he had no such design as that of sending me to a madhouse, whatever he might say in his passion;

also he desired my mother to use the same persuasions to me too, and we might live together as we used to do.

I found the effects of this treaty presently. My husband's conduct was immediately altered, and he was quite another man to me; nothing could be kinder and more obliging than he was to me upon all occasions; and I could do no less than make some return to it, which I did as well as I could, but it was but in an awkward manner at best, for nothing was more frightful to me than his caresses, and the apprehensions of being with child again by him was ready to throw me into fits; and this made me see that there was an absolute necessity of breaking the case to him without any more delay, which, however, I did with all the caution and reserve imaginable.

He had continued his altered carriage to me near a month, and we began to live a new kind of life with one another, and could I have satisfied myself to have gone on with it, I believe it might have continued as long as we had continued alive together. One evening, as we were sitting and talking together under a little awning, which served as an arbour at the entrance into the garden, he was in a very pleasant, agreeable humour, and said abundance of kind things to me relating to the pleasure of our present good agreement, and the disorders of

our past breach, and what a satisfaction it was to him that we had room to hope we should never have any more of it.

I fetched a deep sigh, and told him there was nobody in the world could be more delighted than I was in the good agreement we had always kept up, or more afflicted with the breach of it; but I was sorry to tell him that there was an unhappy circumstance in our case, which lay too close to my heart, and which I knew not how to break to him, that rendered my part of it very miserable, and took from me all the comfort of the rest.

He importuned me to tell him what it was. I told him I could not tell how to do it; that while it was concealed from him, I alone was unhappy, but if he knew it also, we should be both so; and that, therefore, to keep him in the dark about it was the kindest thing that I could do, and it was on that account alone that I kept a secret from him, the very keeping of which, I thought, would first or last be my destruction.

It is impossible to express his surprise at this relation, and the double importunity which he used with me to discover it to him. He told me I could not be called kind to him, nay, I could not be faithful to him, if I concealed it from him. I told him I thought so too, and yet I could not do it. He went back to what I had said before to him, and told me

he hoped it did not relate to what I said in my passion, and that he had resolved to forget all that as the effect of a rash, provoked spirit. I told him I wished I could forget it all too, but that it was not to be done, the impression was too deep, and it was impossible.

He then told me he was resolved not to differ with me in anything, and that therefore he would importune me no more about it, resolving to acquiesce in whatever I did or said; only begged I would then agree, that whatever it was, it should no more interrupt our quiet and our mutual kindness.

This was the most provoking thing he could have said to me, for I really wanted his further importunities, that I might be prevailed with to bring out that which indeed was like death to me to conceal. So I answered him plainly that I could not say I was glad not to be importuned, though I could not tell how to comply. "But come, my dear," said I, "what conditions will you make with me upon the opening this affair to you?"

"Any conditions in the world," said he, "that you can in reason desire of me." "Well," said I, "come, give it me under your hand, that if you do not find I am in any fault, or that I am willingly concerned in the causes of the misfortunes that is to follow, you will not blame me, use me the worse, do me any injury, or make me be the sufferer for that which is not my fault."

"That," says he, "is the most reasonable demand in the world; not to blame you for that which is not your fault. Give me a pen and ink," says he; so I ran in and fetched pen, ink, and paper, and he wrote the condition down in the very words I had proposed it, and signed it with his name. "Well," says he, "what is next, my dear?" "Why," says I, "the next is, that you will not blame me for not discovering the secret to you before I knew it." "Very just again," says he; "with all my heart;" so he wrote down that also, and signed it.

"Well, my dear," says I, "then I have but one condition more to make with you, and that is, that as there is nobody concerned in it but you and I, you shall not discover it to any person in the world, except your own mother; and that in all the measures you shall take upon the discovery, as I am equally concerned in it with you, though as innocent as yourself, you shall do nothing in a passion, nothing to my prejudice, or to your mother's prejudice, without my knowledge and consent."

This a little amazed him, and he wrote down the words distinctly, but read them over and over before he signed them, hesitating at them several times, and repeating them: "My mother's prejudice! and your prejudice! What mysterious thing can this be?" However, at last he signed it.

"Well," says I, "my dear, I'll ask you no more

under your hand ; but as you are to hear the most unexpected and surprising thing that perhaps ever befell any family in the world, I beg you to promise me you will receive it with composure and a presence of mind suitable to a man of sense."

"I 'll do my utmost," says he, "upon condition you will keep me no longer in suspense, for you terrify me with all these preliminaries."

"Well, then," says I, "it is this : As I told you before in a heat, that I was not your lawful wife, and that our children were not legal children, so I must let you know now in calmness, and in kindness, but with affliction enough, that I am your own sister, and you my own brother, and that we are both the children of our mother now alive, and in the house, who is convinced of the truth of it, in a manner not to be denied or contradicted."

I saw him turn pale and look wild ; and I said, "Now remember your promise, and receive it with presence of mind ; for who could have said more to prepare you for it than I have done ?" However, I called a servant, and got him a little glass of rum (which is the usual dram of the country), for he was fainting away.

When he was a little recovered I said to him, "This story, you may be sure, requires a long explanation, and, therefore, have patience and compose your mind to hear it out, and I 'll make it as short

as I can ; " and with this, I told him what I thought was needful of the fact, and particularly how my mother came to discover it to me, as above. " And now, my dear," says I, " you will see reason for my capitulations, and that I neither have been the cause of this matter, nor could be so, and that I could know nothing of it before now."

" I am fully satisfied of that," says he, " but 't is a dreadful surprise to me ; however, I know a remedy for it all, and a remedy that shall put an end to all your difficulties, without your going to England." " That would be strange," said I, " as all the rest." " No, no," says he, " I 'll make it easy ; there 's nobody in the way of it all but myself." He looked a little disordered when he said this, but I did not apprehend anything from it at that time, believing, as it used to be said, that they who do those things never talk of them, or that they who talk of such things never do them.

But things were not come to their height with him, and I observed he became pensive and melancholy ; and in a word, as I thought, a little distempered in his head. I endeavoured to talk him into temper, and into a kind of scheme for our government in the affair, and sometimes he would be well, and talk with some courage about it ; but the weight of it lay too heavy upon his thoughts, and went so far that he made two attempts upon himself, and in one of them

had actually strangled himself, and had not his mother come into the room in the very moment, he had died; but with the help of a negro servant, she cut him down and recovered him.

Things were now come to a lamentable height. My pity for him now began to revive that affection which at first I really had for him, and I endeavoured sincerely, by all the kind carriage I could, to make up the breach; but, in short, it had gotten too great a head, it preyed upon his spirits, and it threw him into a lingering consumption, though it happened not to be mortal. In this distress I did not know what to do, as his life was apparently declining, and I might perhaps have married again there, very much to my advantage, had it been my business to have stayed in the country; but my mind was restless too; I hankered after coming to England, and nothing would satisfy me without it.

In short, by an unwearied importunity, my husband, who was apparently decaying, as I observed, was at last prevailed with; and so my fate pushing me on, the way was made clear for me, and my mother concurring, I obtained a very good cargo for my coming to England.

When I parted with my brother (for such I am now to call him), we agreed that after I arrived, he should pretend to have an account that I was dead in England, and so might marry again when he

would. He promised, and engaged to me to correspond with me as a sister, and to assist and support me as long as I lived; and that if he died before me, he would leave sufficient to his mother to take care of me still, in the name of a sister, and he was in some respects just to this; but it was so oddly managed that I felt the disappointments very sensibly afterwards, as you shall hear in its time.

I came away in the month of August, after I had been eight years in that country; and now a new scene of misfortunes attended me, which perhaps few women have gone through the like.

We had an indifferent good voyage till we came just upon the coast of England, and where we arrived in two-and-thirty days, but were then ruffled with two or three storms, one of which drove us away to the coast of Ireland, and we put in at Kinsale. We remained there about thirteen days, got some refreshment on shore, and put to sea again, though we met with very bad weather again, in which the ship sprung her mainmast, as they called it. But we got at last into Milford Haven, in Wales, where, though it was remote from our port, yet having my foot safe upon the firm ground of the isle of Britain, I resolved to venture it no more upon the waters, which had been so terrible to me; so getting my clothes and money on shore, with my bills of loading and other papers, I resolved to come for London,

and leave the ship to get to her port as she could ; the port whither she was bound was to Bristol, where my brother's chief correspondent lived.

I got to London in about three weeks, where I heard a little while after that the ship was arrived at Bristol, but at the same time had the misfortune to know that by the violent weather she had been in, and the breaking of her mainmast, she had great damage on board, and that a great part of her cargo was spoiled.

I had now a new scene of life upon my hands, and a dreadful appearance it had. I was come away with a kind of final farewell. What I brought with me was indeed considerable, had it come safe, and by the help of it I might have married again tolerably well ; but as it was, I was reduced to between two or three hundred pounds in the whole, and this without any hope of recruit. I was entirely without friends, nay, even so much as without acquaintances, for I found it was absolutely necessary not to revive former acquaintance ; and as for my subtle friend that set me up formerly for a fortune, she was dead, and her husband also.

The looking after my cargo of goods soon after obliged me to take a journey to Bristol, and during my attendance upon that affair I took the diversion of going to Bath, for as I was still far from being old, so my humour, which was always gay, continued

so to an extreme ; and being now, as it were, a woman of fortune, though I was a woman without a fortune, I expected something or other might happen in the way that might mend my circumstances, as had been my case before.

Bath is a place of gallantry enough ; expensive, and full of snares. I went thither, indeed, in the view of taking what might offer ; but I must do myself that justice as to protest I meant nothing but in an honest way, nor had any thoughts about me at first that looked the way which afterwards I suffered them to be guided.

Here I stayed the whole latter season, as it is called there, and contracted some unhappy acquaintance, which rather prompted the follies I fell afterwards into than fortified me against them. I lived pleasantly enough, kept good company, that is to say, gay, fine company ; but had the discouragement to find this way of living sunk me exceedingly, and that as I had no settled income, so spending upon the main stock was but a certain kind of bleeding to death ; and this gave me many sad reflections. However, I shook them off, and still flattered myself that something or other might offer for my advantage.

But I was in the wrong place for it. I was not now at Redriff, where if I had set myself tolerably up, some honest sea captain or other might have

talked with me upon the honourable terms of matrimony; but I was at Bath, where men find a mistress sometimes, but very rarely look for a wife; and consequently all the particular acquaintances a woman can expect there must have some tendency that way.

I had spent the first season well enough; for though I had contracted some acquaintance with a gentleman who came to Bath for his diversion, yet I had entered into no felonious treaty. I had resisted some casual offers of gallantry, and had managed that way well enough. I was not wicked enough to come into the crime for the mere vice of it, and I had no extraordinary offers that tempted me with the main thing which I wanted.

However, I went this length the first season, viz., I contracted an acquaintance with a woman in whose house I lodged, who, though she did not keep an ill house, yet had none of the best principles in herself. I had on all occasions behaved myself so well as not to get the least slur upon my reputation, and all the men that I had conversed with were of so good reputation that I had not gotten the least reflection by conversing with them; nor did any of them seem to think there was room for a wicked correspondence if they had offered it; yet there was one gentleman, as above, who always singled me out for the diversion of my company, as he called it, which, as he was pleased

to say, was very agreeable to him, but at that time there was no more in it.

I had many melancholy hours at Bath after all the company was gone; for though I went to Bristol sometimes for the disposing my effects, and for recruits of money, yet I chose to come back to Bath for my residence, because, being on good terms with the woman in whose house I lodged in the summer, I found that during the winter I lived rather cheaper there than I could do anywhere else. Here, I say, I passed the winter as heavily as I had passed the autumn cheerfully; but having contracted a nearer intimacy with the said woman, in whose house I lodged, I could not avoid communicating something of what lay hardest upon my mind, and particularly the narrowness of my circumstances. I told her also, that I had a mother and a brother in Virginia in good circumstances; and as I had really written back to my mother in particular to represent my condition, and the great loss I had received, so I did not fail to let my new friend know that I expected a supply from thence, and so indeed I did; and as the ships went from Bristol to York River, in Virginia, and back again generally in less time than from London, and that my brother corresponded chiefly at Bristol, I thought it was much better for me to wait here for my returns than to go to London.

My new friend appeared sensibly affected with my

condition, and indeed was so very kind as to reduce the rate of my living with her to so low a price during the winter, that she convinced me she got nothing by me; and as for lodging, during the winter I paid nothing at all.

When the spring season came on, she continued to be as kind to me as she could, and I lodged with her for a time, till it was found necessary to do otherwise. She had some persons of character that frequently lodged in her house, and in particular the gentleman who, as I said, singled me out for his companion in the winter before; and he came down again with another gentleman in his company and two servants, and lodged in the same house. I suspected that my landlady had invited him thither, letting him know that I was still with her; but she denied it.

In a word, this gentleman came down and continued to single me out for his peculiar confidence. He was a complete gentleman, that must be confessed, and his company was agreeable to me, as mine, if I might believe him, was to him. He made no professions to me but of an extraordinary respect, and he had such an opinion of my virtue, that, as he often professed, he believed, if he should offer anything else, I should reject him with contempt. He soon understood from me that I was a widow; that I had arrived at Bristol from Virginia by the last

ships ; and that I waited at Bath till the next Virginia fleet should arrive, by which I expected considerable effects. I understood by him that he had a wife, but that the lady was distempered in her head, and was under the conduct of her own relations, which he consented to, to avoid any reflection that might be cast upon him for mismanaging her cure ; and in the meantime he came to Bath to divert his thoughts under such a melancholy circumstance.

My landlady, who of her own accord encouraged the correspondence on all occasions, gave me an advantageous character of him, as of a man of honour, and of virtue, as well as of a great estate. And indeed I had reason to say so of him too ; for though we lodged both on a floor, and he had frequently come into my chamber, even when I was in bed, and I also into his, yet he never offered anything to me further than a kiss, or so much as solicited me to anything till long after, as you shall hear.

I frequently took notice to my landlady of his exceeding modesty, and she again used to tell me she believed it was so from the beginning ; however, she used to tell me that she thought I ought to expect some gratifications from him for my company, for indeed he did as it were engross me. I told her I had not given him the least occasion to think I wanted it, or that I would accept of it from him.

She told me she would take that part upon her, and she managed it so dexterously, that the first time we were together alone, after she had talked with him, he began to inquire a little into my circumstances, as how I had subsisted myself since I came on shore, and whether I did not want money. I stood off very boldly. I told him that though my cargo of tobacco was damaged, yet that it was not quite lost; that the merchant that I had been consigned to had so honestly managed for me that I had not wanted, and that I hoped, with frugal management, I should make it hold out till more would come, which I expected by the next fleet; that in the meantime I had retrenched my expenses, and whereas I kept a maid last season, now I lived without; and whereas I had a chamber and a dining-room then on the first floor, I now had but one room two pair of stairs, and the like; "but I live," said I, "as well satisfied now as then;" adding, that his company had made me live much more cheerfully than otherwise I should have done, for which I was much obliged to him; and so I put off all room for any offer at the present. It was not long before he attacked me again, and told me he found that I was backward to trust him with the secret of my circumstances, which he was sorry for; assuring me that he inquired into it with no design to satisfy his own curiosity, but merely to assist me if there was any occasion; but since I would

not own myself to stand in need of any assistance, he had but one thing more to desire of me, and that was, that I would promise him that when I was any way straitened, I would frankly tell him of it, and that I would make use of him with the same freedom that he made the offer; adding, that I should always find I had a true friend, though perhaps I was afraid to trust him.

I omitted nothing that was fit to be said by one infinitely obliged, to let him know that I had a due sense of his kindness; and indeed from that time I did not appear so much reserved to him as I had done before, though still within the bounds of the strictest virtue on both sides; but how free soever our conversation was, I could not arrive to that freedom which he desired, viz., to tell him I wanted money, though I was secretly very glad of his offer.

Some weeks passed after this, and still I never asked him for money; when my landlady, a cunning creature, who had often pressed me to it, but found that I could not do it, makes a story of her own inventing, and comes in bluntly to me when we were together, "Oh, widow!" says she, "I have bad news to tell you this morning." "What is that?" said I. "Are the Virginia ships taken by the French?" for that was my fear. "No, no," says she, "but the man you sent to Bristol yesterday for money has come back, and says he has brought none."

I could by no means like her project; I thought it looked too much like prompting him, which he did not want, and I saw that I should lose nothing by being backward, so took her up short. "I can't imagine why he should say so," said I, "for I assure you he brought me all the money I sent him for, and here it is," said I (pulling out my purse with about twelve guineas in it); and added, "I intend you shall have most of it by-and-by."

He seemed distasted a little at her talking as she did, as well as I, taking it, as I fancied he would, as something forward of her; but when he saw me give such an answer, he came immediately to himself. The next morning we talked of it again, when I found he was fully satisfied; and, smiling, said he hoped I would not want money, and not tell him of it, and that I had promised him otherwise. I told him I had been very much dissatisfied at my landlady's talking so publicly the day before of what she had nothing to do with; but I supposed she wanted what I owed her, which was about eight guineas, which I had resolved to give her, and had given it her the same night.

He was in a mighty good humour when he heard me say I had paid her, and it went off into some other discourse at that time. But the next morning, he having heard me up before him, he called to me, and I answered. He asked me to come into

his chamber; he was in bed when I came in, and he made me come and sit down on his bedside, for he said he had something to say to me. After some very kind expressions, he asked me if I would be very honest to him, and give a sincere answer to one thing he would desire of me. After some little cavil with him at the word "sincere," and asking him if I had ever given him any answers which were not sincere, I promised him I would. Why, then, his request was, he said, to let him see my purse. I immediately put my hand into my pocket, and laughing at him, pulled it out, and there was in it three guineas and a half. Then he asked me if there was all the money I had. I told him no, laughing again, not by a great deal.

Well, then, he said, he would have me promise to go and fetch him all the money I had, every farthing. I told him I would, and I went into my chamber, and fetched him a little private drawer, where I had about six guineas more, and some silver, and threw it all down upon the bed, and told him there was all my wealth, honestly to a shilling. He looked a little at it, but did not tell it, and huddled it all into the drawer again, and then reaching his pocket, pulled out a key, and bade me open a little walnut-tree box he had upon the table, and bring him such a drawer, which I did. In this drawer there was a great deal of money in gold, I believe near two hun-

dred guineas, but I knew not how much. He took the drawer, and taking me by the hand, made me put it in and take a whole handful; I was backward at that, but he held my hand hard in his hand, and put it into the drawer, and made me take out as many guineas almost as I could well take up at once.

When I had done so, he made me put them into my lap, and took my little drawer, and poured out all my own money among his, and bade me get me gone, and carry it all into my own chamber.

I relate this story the more particularly, because of the good-humour of it, and to show the temper with which we conversed. It was not long after this, but he began every day to find fault with my clothes, with my laces, and head-dresses, and, in a word, pressed me to buy better, which, by the way, I was willing enough to do, though I did not seem to be so. I loved nothing in the world better than fine clothes; but I told him I must housewife the money he had lent me, or else I should not be able to pay him again. He then told me, in a few words, that as he had a sincere respect for me, and knew my circumstances, he had not lent me that money, but given it me, and that he thought I had merited it from him, by giving him my company so entirely as I had done. After this he made me take a maid, and keep house, and his friend being gone, he

obliged me to diet him, which I did very willingly, believing, as it appeared, that I should lose nothing by it, nor did the woman of the house fail to find her account in it too.

We had lived thus near three months, when the company beginning to wear away at Bath, he talked of going away, and fain he would have me to go to London with him. I was not very easy in that proposal, not knowing what posture I was to live in there, or how he might use me. But while this was in debate, he fell very sick; he had gone out to a place in Somersetshire, called Shepton, and was there taken very ill, and so ill that he could not travel; so he sent his man back to Bath, to beg me that I would hire a coach and come over to him. Before he went, he had left his money and other things of value with me, and what to do with them I did not know, but I secured them as well as I could, and locked up the lodgings and went to him, where I found him very ill indeed, so I persuaded him to be carried in a litter to Bath, where was more help and better advice to be had.

He consented, and I brought him to Bath, which was about fifteen miles, as I remember. Here he continued very ill of a fever, and kept his bed five weeks, all which time I nursed him and tended him as carefully as if I had been his wife; indeed, if I had been his wife I could not have done more. I

sat up with him so much and so often, that at last, indeed, he would not let me sit up any longer, and then I got a pallet-bed into his room, and lay in it just at his bed's feet.

I was indeed sensibly affected with his condition, and with the apprehensions of losing such a friend as he was, and was like to be to me, and I used to sit and cry by him many hours together. At last he grew better, and gave hopes that he would recover, as indeed he did, though very slowly.

Were it otherwise than what I am going to say, I should not be backward to disclose it, as it is apparent I have done in other cases; but I affirm, through all this conversation, abating the coming into the chamber when I or he was in bed, and the necessary offices of attending him night and day when he was sick, there had not passed the least immodest word or action between us. Oh that it had been so to the last!

After some time he gathered strength and grew well apace, and I would have removed my pallet-bed, but he would not let me, till he was able to venture himself without anybody to sit up with him, when I removed to my own chamber.

He took many occasions to express his sense of my tenderness for him; and when he grew well he made me a present of fifty guineas for my care, and, as he called it, hazarding my life to save his.

And now he made deep protestations of a sincere inviolable affection for me, but with the utmost reserve for my virtue and his own. I told him I was fully satisfied of it. He carried it that length that he protested to me, that if he was naked in bed with me, he would as sacredly preserve my virtue as he would defend it, if I was assaulted by a ravisher. I believed him, and told him I did so; but this did not satisfy him; he would, he said, wait for some opportunity to give me an undoubted testimony of it.

It was a great while after this that I had occasion, on my business, to go to Bristol, upon which he hired me a coach, and would go with me; and now indeed our intimacy increased. From Bristol he carried me to Gloucester, which was merely a journey of pleasure, to take the air; and here it was our hap to have no lodgings in the inn, but in one large chamber with two beds in it. The master of the house going with us to show his rooms, and coming into that room, said very frankly to him, "Sir, it is none of my business to inquire whether the lady be your spouse or no, but if not, you may lie as honestly in these two beds as if you were in two chambers," and with that he pulls a great curtain which drew quite across the room, and effectually divided the beds. "Well," says my friend, very readily, "these beds will do; and as for the

rest, we are too near akin to lie together, though we may lodge near one another;" and this put an honest face on the thing too. When we came to go to bed, he decently went out of the room till I was in bed, and then went to bed in the other bed, but lay there talking to me a great while.

At last, repeating his usual saying, that he could lie naked in the bed with me, and not offer me the least injury, he starts out of his bed. "And now, my dear," says he, "you shall see how just I will be to you, and that I can keep my word," and away he comes to my bed.

I resisted a little, but I must confess I should not have resisted him much, if he had not made those promises at all; so after a little struggle, I lay still and let him come to bed. When he was there he took me in his arms, and so I lay all night with him, but he had no more to do with me, or offered anything to me, other than embracing me, as I say, in his arms, no, not the whole night, but rose up and dressed him in the morning, and left me as innocent for him as I was the day I was born.

This was a surprising thing to me, and perhaps may be so to others, who know how the laws of nature work; for he was a vigorous, brisk person. Nor did he act thus on a principle of religion at all, but of mere affection; insisting on it, that though I was to him the most agreeable woman in

the world, yet, because he loved me, he could not injure me.

I own it was a noble principle, but as it was what I never saw before, so it was perfectly amazing. We travelled the rest of the journey as we did before, and came back to Bath, where, as he had opportunity to come to me when he would, he often repeated the same moderation, and I frequently lay with him, and although all the familiarities of man and wife were common to us, yet he never once offered to go any further, and he valued himself much upon it. I do not say that I was so wholly pleased with it as he thought I was, for I own I was much wickeder than he.

We lived thus near two years, only with this exception, that he went three times to London in that time, and once he continued there four months; but, to do him justice, he always supplied me with money to subsist on very handsomely.

Had we continued thus, I confess we had had much to boast of; but, as wise men say, it is ill venturing too near the brink of a command. So we found it; and here again I must do him the justice to own that the first breach was not on his part. It was one night that we were in bed together warm and merry, and having drunk, I think, a little more both of us than usual, though not in the least to disorder us, when, after some other follies which I

cannot name, and being clasped close in his arms, I told him (I repeat it with shame and horror of soul) that I could find in my heart to discharge him of his engagement for one night and no more.

He took me at my word immediately, and after that there was no resisting him ; neither indeed had I any mind to resist him any more.

Thus the government of our virtue was broken, and I exchanged the place of friend for that unmusical, harsh-sounding title of whore. In the morning we were both at our penitentials ; I cried very heartily, he expressed himself very sorry ; but that was all either of us could do at that time, and the way being thus cleared, and the bars of virtue and conscience thus removed, we had the less to struggle with.

It was but a dull kind of conversation that we had together for all the rest of that week ; I looked on him with blushes, and every now and then started that melancholy objection, "What if I should be with child now? What will become of me then?" He encouraged me by telling me, that as long as I was true to him, he would be so to me ; and since it was gone such a length (which indeed he never intended), yet if I was with child, he would take care of that and me too. This hardened us both. I assured him if I was with child, I would die for want of a midwife rather than name him as the father of

it; and he assured me I should never want if I should be with child. These mutual assurances hardened us in the thing, and after this we repeated the crime as often as we pleased, till at length, as I feared, so it came to pass, and I was indeed with child.

After I was sure it was so, and I had satisfied him of it too, we began to think of taking measures for the managing it, and I proposed trusting the secret to my landlady, and asking her advice, which he agreed to. My landlady, a woman (as I found) used to such things, made light of it; she said she knew it would come to that at last, and made us very merry about it. As I said above, we found her an experienced old lady at such work; she undertook everything, engaged to procure a midwife and a nurse, to satisfy all inquiries, and bring us off with reputation, and she did so very dexterously indeed.

When I grew near my time, she desired my gentleman to go away to London, or make as if he did so. When he was gone, she acquainted the parish officers that there was a lady ready to lie in at her house, but that she knew her husband very well, and gave them, as she pretended, an account of his name, which she called Sir Walter Cleave; telling them he was a worthy gentleman, and that she would answer for all inquiries, and the like. This satisfied the parish officers presently, and I lay in in as much

credit as I could have done if I had really been my Lady Cleave; and was assisted in my travail by three or four of the best citizens' wives of Bath, which, however, made me a little the more expensive to him. I often expressed my concern to him about that part, but he bid me not be concerned at it.

As he had furnished me very sufficiently with money for the extraordinary expenses of my lying in, I had everything very handsome about me, but did not affect to be so gay or extravagant neither; besides, knowing the world, as I had done, and that such kind of things do not often last long, I took care to lay up as much money as I could for a wet day, as I called it; making him believe it was all spent upon the extraordinary appearance of things in my lying in.

By this means, with what he had given me as above, I had at the end of my lying in two hundred guineas by me, including also what was left of my own.

I was brought to bed of a fine boy indeed, and a charming child it was; and when he heard of it, he wrote me a very kind, obliging letter about it, and then told me he thought it would look better for me to come away for London as soon as I was up and well; that he had provided apartments for me at Hammersmith, as if I came only from London; and that after a while I should go back to Bath, and he would go with me.

I liked his offer very well, and hired a coach on purpose, and taking my child and a wet-nurse to tend and suckle it, and a maid-servant with me, away I went for London.

He met me at Reading in his own chariot, and taking me into that, left the servant and the child in the hired coach, and so he brought me to my new lodgings at Hammersmith ; with which I had abundance of reason to be very well pleased, for they were very handsome rooms.

And now I was indeed in the height of what I might call prosperity, and I wanted nothing but to be a wife, which, however, could not be in this case, and therefore on all occasions I studied to save what I could, as I said above, against the time of scarcity ; knowing well enough that such things as these do not always continue ; that men that keep mistresses often change them, grow weary of them, or jealous of them, or something or other; and sometimes the ladies that are thus well used, are not careful by a prudent conduct to preserve the esteem of their persons, or the nice article of their fidelity, and then they are justly cast off with contempt.

But I was secured in this point, for as I had no inclination to change, so I had no manner of acquaintance, so no temptation to look any farther. I kept no company but in the family where I lodged, and with a clergyman's lady at next door ; so that when

he was absent I visited nobody, nor did he ever find me out of my chamber or parlour whenever he came down; if I went anywhere to take the air, it was always with him.

The living in this manner with him, and his with me, was certainly the most undesigned thing in the world; he often protested to me that when he became first acquainted with me, and even to the very night when we first broke in upon our rules, he never had the least design of lying with me; that he always had a sincere affection for me, but not the least real inclination to do what he had done. I assured him I never suspected him; that if I had I should not so easily have yielded to the freedoms which brought it on, but that it was all a surprise, and was owing to our having yielded too far to our mutual inclinations that night; and indeed I have often observed since, and leave it as a caution to the readers of this story, that we ought to be cautious of gratifying our inclinations in loose and lewd freedoms, lest we find our resolutions of virtue fail us in the juncture when their assistance should be most necessary.

It is true that from the first hour I began to converse with him, I resolved to let him lie with me, if he offered it; but it was because I wanted his help, and knew of no other way of securing him. But when we were that night together, and, as I have said, had gone such a length, I found my weakness;

the inclination was not to be resisted, but I was obliged to yield up all even before he asked it.

However, he was so just to me that he never upbraided me with that; nor did he ever express the least dislike of my conduct on any other occasion, but always protested he was as much delighted with my company as he was the first hour we came together.

It is true that he had no wife, that is to say, she was no wife to him, but the reflections of conscience oftentimes snatch a man, especially a man of sense, from the arms of a mistress, as it did him at last, though on another occasion.

On the other hand, though I was not without secret reproaches of my own conscience for the life I led, and that even in the greatest height of the satisfaction I ever took, yet I had the terrible prospect of poverty and starving, which lay on me as a frightful spectre, so that there was no looking behind me; but as poverty brought me into it, so fear of poverty kept me in it, and I frequently resolved to leave it quite off, if I could but come to lay up money enough to maintain me. But these were thoughts of no weight, and whenever he came to me they vanished; for his company was so delightful, that there was no being melancholy when he was there; the reflections were all the subject of those hours when I was alone.

I lived six years in this happy but unhappy condi-

tion, in which time I brought him three children, but only the first of them lived; and though I removed twice in that six years, yet I came back the sixth year to my first lodgings at Hammersmith. Here it was that I was one morning surprised with a kind but melancholy letter from my gentleman, intimating that he was very ill, and was afraid he should have another fit of sickness, but that his wife's relations being in the house with him, it would not be practicable to have me with him, which, however, he expressed his great dissatisfaction in, and that he wished I could be allowed to tend and nurse him as I did before.

I was very much concerned at this account, and was very impatient to know how it was with him. I waited a fortnight or thereabouts, and heard nothing, which surprised me, and I began to be very uneasy indeed. I think, I may say, that for the next fortnight I was near to distracted. It was my particular difficulty, that I did not know directly where he was; for I understood at first he was in the lodgings of his wife's mother; but having removed myself to London, I soon found, by the help of the direction I had for writing my letters to him, how to inquire after him, and there I found that he was at a house in Bloomsbury, whither he had removed his whole family; and that his wife and wife's mother were in the same house, though the wife was not suffered

to know that she was in the same house with her husband.

Here I also soon understood that he was at the last extremity, which made me almost at the last extremity too, to have a true account. One night I had the curiosity to disguise myself like a servant-maid, in a round cap and straw hat, and went to the door, as sent by a lady of his neighbourhood, where he lived before, and giving master and mistress's service, I said I was sent to know how Mr. —— did, and how he had rested that night. In delivering this message I got the opportunity I desired; for, speaking with one of the maids, I held a long gossip's tale with her, and had all the particulars of his illness, which I found was a pleurisy, attended with a cough and fever. She told me also who was in the house, and how his wife was, who, by her relation, they were in some hopes might recover her understanding; but as to the gentleman himself, the doctors said there was very little hopes of him, that in the morning they thought he had been dying, and that he was but little better then, for they did not expect that he could live over the next night.

This was heavy news for me, and I began now to see an end of my prosperity, and to see that it was well I had played the good housewife, and saved something while he was alive, for now I had no view of my own living before me.

It lay very heavy upon my mind, too, that I had a son, a fine lovely boy, about five years old, and no provision made for it, at least that I knew of. With these considerations, and a sad heart, I went home that evening, and began to cast with myself how I should live, and in what manner to bestow myself, for the residue of my life.

You may be sure I could not rest without inquiring again very quickly what was become of him; and not venturing to go myself, I sent several sham messengers, till after a fortnight's waiting longer, I found that there was hopes of his life, though he was still very ill; then I abated my sending to the house, and in some time after, I learnt in the neighbourhood that he was about house, and then that he was abroad again.

I made no doubt then but that I should soon hear of him, and began to comfort myself with my circumstances being, as I thought, recovered. I waited a week, and two weeks, and with much surprise near two months, and heard nothing, but that, being recovered, he was gone into the country for the air after his distemper. After this it was yet two months more, and then I understood he was come to his city house again, but still I heard nothing from him.

I had written several letters for him, and directed them as usual, and found two or three of them had

been called for, but not the rest. I wrote again in a more pressing manner than ever, and in one of them let him know that I must be forced to wait on him myself, representing my circumstances, the rent of lodgings to pay, and the provision for the child wanting, and my own deplorable condition, destitute of subsistence after his most solemn engagement to take care of and provide for me. I took a copy of this letter, and finding it lay at the house near a month, and was not called for, I found means to have the copy of it put into his hands at a coffee-house where I had found he had used to go.

This letter forced an answer from him, by which, though I found I was to be abandoned, yet I found he had sent a letter to me some time before, desiring me to go down to Bath again. Its contents I shall come to presently.

It is true that sick-beds are the times when such correspondences as this are looked on with different countenances, and seen with other eyes than we saw them with before: my lover had been at the gates of death, and at the very brink of eternity; and, it seems, struck with a due remorse, and with sad reflections upon his past life of gallantry and levity; and among the rest, his criminal correspondence with me, which was indeed neither more or less than a long-continued life of adultery, had represented itself as it really was, not as it had been formerly thought

by him to be, and he looked upon it now with a just abhorrence.

I cannot but observe also, and leave it for the direction of my sex in such cases of pleasure, that whenever sincere repentance succeeds such a crime as this, there never fails to attend a hatred of the object; and the more the affection might seem to be before, the hatred will be more in proportion. It will always be so; indeed it cannot be otherwise; for there cannot be a true and sincere abhorrence of the offence, and the love to the cause of it remain; there will, with an abhorrence of the sin, be found a detestation of the fellow-sinner; you can expect no other.

I found it so here, though good manners, and justice in this gentleman, kept him from carrying it on to any extreme; but the short history of his part in this affair was thus; he perceived by my last letter, and by the rest, which he went for after, that I was not gone to Bath, and that his first letter had not come to my hand, upon which he writes me this following: —

"Madam, — I am surprised that my letter, dated the 8th of last month, did not come to your hand; I give you my word it was delivered at your lodgings, and to the hands of your maid.

"I need not acquaint you with what has been my condition for some time past; and how, having been at the edge of the grave, I am, by the unexpected and

undeserved mercy of Heaven, restored again. In the condition I have been in, it cannot be strange to you that our unhappy correspondence has not been the least of the burthens which lay upon my conscience. I need say no more; those things that must be repented of, must also be reformed.

"I wish you would think of going back to Bath. I enclose you here a bill for £50 for clearing yourself at your lodgings, and carrying you down, and hope it will be no surprise to you to add, that on this account only, and not for any offence given me on your side, I can *see you no more.* I will take due care of the child; leave him where he is, or take him with you, as you please. I wish you the like reflections, and that they may be to your advantage. — I am, &c."

I was struck with this letter, as with a thousand wounds; the reproaches of my own conscience were such as I cannot express, for I was not blind to my own crime; and I reflected that I might with less offence have continued with my brother, since there was no crime in our marriage on that score, neither of us knowing it.

But I never once reflected that I was all this while a married woman, a wife to Mr. ——, the linen-draper, who, though he had left me by the necessity of his circumstances, had no power to discharge me from the marriage contract which was between us, or to give me a legal liberty to marry again; so that I had been no less than a whore and an adulteress all

this while. I then reproached myself with the liberties I had taken, and how I had been a snare to this gentleman, and that indeed I was principal in the crime; that now he was mercifully snatched out of the gulf by a convincing work upon his mind, but that I was left as if I was abandoned by Heaven to a continuing in my wickedness.

Under these reflections I continued very pensive and sad for near a month, and did not go down to Bath, having no inclination to be with the woman whom I was with before, lest, as I thought, she should prompt me to some wicked course of life again, as she had done; and besides, I was loth she should know I was cast off as above.

And now I was greatly perplexed about my little boy. It was death to me to part with the child, and yet when I considered the danger of being one time or other left with him to keep without being able to support him, I then resolved to leave him; but then I concluded to be near him myself too, that I might have the satisfaction of seeing him, without the care of providing for him. So I sent my gentleman a short letter that I had obeyed his orders in all things but that of going back to Bath; that however parting from him was a wound to me that I could never recover, yet that I was fully satisfied his reflections were just, and would be very far from desiring to obstruct his reformation.

Then I represented my own circumstances to him in the most moving terms. I told him that those unhappy distresses which first moved him to a generous friendship for me, would, I hoped, move him to a little concern for me now, though the criminal part of our correspondence, which I believe neither of us intended to fall into at that time, was broken off; that I desired to repent as sincerely as he had done, but entreated him to put me in some condition that I might not be exposed to temptations from the frightful prospect of poverty and distress; and if he had the least apprehensions of my being troublesome to him, I begged he would put me in a posture to go back to my mother in Virginia, from whence he knew I came, and that would put an end to all his fears on that account. I concluded, that if he would send me £50 more to facilitate my going away, I would send him back a general release, and would promise never to disturb him more with any importunities; unless it were to hear of the well-doing of the child, who, if I found my mother living, and my circumstances able, I would send for, and take him also off his hands.

This was indeed all a cheat thus far, viz., that I had no intention to go to Virginia, as the account of my former affairs there may convince anybody of; but the business was to get this last £50 of him, if possible, knowing well enough it would be the last penny I was ever to expect.

However, the argument I used, namely, of giving him a general release, and never troubling him any more, prevailed effectually, and he sent me a bill for the money by a person who brought with him a general release for me to sign, and which I frankly signed; and thus, though full sore against my will, a final end was put to this affair.

And here I cannot but reflect upon the unhappy consequence of too great freedoms between persons stated as we were, upon the pretence of innocent intentions, love of friendship, and the like; for the flesh has generally so great a share in those friendships, that it is great odds but inclination prevails at last over the most solemn resolutions; and that vice breaks in at the breaches of decency, which really innocent friendship ought to preserve with the greatest strictness. But I leave the readers of these things to their own just reflections, which they will be more able to make effectual than I, who so soon forgot myself, and am therefore but a very indifferent monitor.

I was now a single person again, as I may call myself; I was loosed from all the obligations either of wedlock or mistress-ship in the world, except my husband the linen-draper, whom I having not now heard from in almost fifteen years, nobody could blame me for thinking myself entirely freed from; seeing also he had at his going away told me, that if

I did not hear frequently from him, I should conclude he was dead, and I might freely marry again to whom I pleased.

I now began to cast up my accounts. I had by many letters, and much importunity, and with the intercession of my mother too, had a second return of some goods from my brother, as I now call him, in Virginia, to make up the damage of the cargo I brought away with me, and this too was upon the condition of my sealing a general release to him, which, though I thought hard, yet I was obliged to promise. I managed so well in this case, that I got my goods away before the release was signed, and then I always found something or other to say to evade the thing, and to put off the signing it at all; till at length I pretended I must write to my brother before I could do it.

Including this recruit, and before I got the last £50, I found my strength to amount, put all together, to about £400, so that with that I had above £450. I had saved £100 more, but I met with a disaster with that, which was this — that a goldsmith in whose hands I had trusted it broke, so I lost £70 of my money, the man's composition not making above £30 out of his £100. I had a little plate, but not much, and was well enough stocked with clothes and linen.

With this stock I had the world to begin again;

but you are to consider that I was not now the same woman as when I lived at Rotherhithe; for, first of all, I was near twenty years older, and did not look the better for my age, nor for my rambles to Virginia and back again; and though I omitted nothing that might set me out to advantage, except painting, for that I never stooped to, yet there would always be some difference seen between five-and-twenty and two-and-forty.

I cast about innumerable ways for my future state of life, and began to consider very seriously what I should do, but nothing offered. I took care to make the world take me for something more than I was, and had it given out that I was a fortune, and that my estate was in my own hands, the last of which was very true, the first of it was as above. I had no acquaintance, which was one of my worst misfortunes, and the consequence of that was, I had no adviser, and, above all, I had nobody to whom I could in confidence commit the secret of my circumstances; and I found by experience, that to be friendless is the worst condition, next to being in want, that a woman can be reduced to: I say a woman, because 't is evident men can be their own advisers and their own directors, and know how to work themselves out of difficulties and into business better than women; but if a woman has no friend to communicate her affairs to, and to advise and assist her,

'tis ten to one but she is undone; nay, and the more money she has, the more danger she is in of being wronged and deceived; and this was my case in the affair of the £100 which I left in the hands of the goldsmith, as above, whose credit, it seems, was upon the ebb before, but I, that had nobody to consult with, knew nothing of it, and so lost my money.

When a woman is thus left desolate and void of counsel, she is just like a bag of money or a jewel dropt on the highway, which is a prey to the next comer; if a man of virtue and upright principles happens to find it, he will have it cried, and the owner may come to hear of it again; but how many times shall such a thing fall into hands that will make no scruple of seizing it for their own, to once that it shall come into good hands?

This was evidently my case, for I was now a loose, unguided creature, and had no help, no assistance, no guide for my conduct; I knew what I aimed at, and what I wanted, but knew nothing how to pursue the end by direct means. I wanted to be placed in a settled state of living, and had I happened to meet with a sober, good husband, I should have been as true a wife to him as virtue itself could have formed. If I had been otherwise, the vice came in always at the door of necessity, not at the door of inclination; and I understood too well, by the want

of it, what the value of a settled life was, to do anything to forfeit the felicity of it; nay, I should have made the better wife for all the difficulties I had passed through, by a great deal; nor did I in any of the times that I had been a wife give my husbands the least uneasiness on account of my behaviour.

But all this was nothing; I found no encouraging prospect. I waited; I lived regularly, and with as much frugality as became my circumstances; but nothing offered, nothing presented, and the main stock wasted apace. What to do I knew not; the terror of approaching poverty lay hard upon my spirits. I had some money, but where to place it I knew not, nor would the interest of it maintain me, at least not in London.

At length a new scene opened. There was in the house where I lodged a north-country gentlewoman, and nothing was more frequent in her discourse than her account of the cheapness of provisions, and the easy way of living in her country; how plentiful and how cheap everything was, what good company they kept, and the like; till at last I told her she almost tempted me to go and live in her country; for I that was a widow, though I had sufficient to live on, yet had no way of increasing it; and that London was an extravagant place; that I found I could not live here under £100 a year, unless I

kept no company, no servant, made no appearance, and buried myself in privacy, as if I was obliged to it by necessity.

I should have observed, that she was always made to believe, as everybody else was, that I was a great fortune, or at least that I had three or four thousand pounds, if not more, and all in my own hands; and she was mighty sweet upon me when she thought me inclined in the least to go into her country. She said she had a sister lived near Liverpool; that her brother was a considerable gentleman there, and had a great estate also in Ireland; that she would go down there in about two months, and if I would give her my company thither, I should be as welcome as herself for a month or more as I pleased, till I should see how I liked the country; and if I thought fit to live there, she would undertake they would take care, though they did not entertain lodgers themselves, they would recommend me to some agreeable family, where I should be placed to my content.

If this woman had known my real circumstances, she would never have laid so many snares, and taken so many weary steps, to catch a poor desolate creature that was good for little when it was caught; and indeed I, whose case was almost desperate, and thought I could not be much worse, was not very anxious about what might befall me, provided they

did me no personal injury; so I suffered myself, though not without a great deal of invitation, and great professions of sincere friendship and real kindness -- I say, I suffered myself to be prevailed upon to go with her, and accordingly I put myself in a posture for a journey, though I did not absolutely know whither I was to go.

And now I found myself in great distress; what little I had in the world was all in money, except, as before, a little plate, some linen, and my clothes; as for household stuff, I had little or none, for I had lived always in lodgings; but I had not one friend in the world with whom to trust that little I had, or to direct me how to dispose of it. I thought of the bank, and of the other companies in London, but I had no friend to commit the management of it to, and to keep and carry about me bank bills, tallies, orders, and such things, I looked upon as unsafe; that if they were lost, my money was lost, and then I was undone; and, on the other hand, I might be robbed, and perhaps murdered in a strange place for them; and what to do I knew not.

It came into my thoughts one morning that I would go to the bank myself, where I had often been to receive the interest of some bills I had, and where I had found the clerk, to whom I applied myself, very honest to me, and particularly so fair one time, that when I had mistold my money, and taken less

than my due, and was coming away, he set me to rights and gave me the rest, which he might have put into his own pocket.

I went to him and asked if he would trouble himself to be my adviser, who was a poor friendless widow, and knew not what to do. He told me, if I desired his opinion of anything within the reach of his business, he would do his endeavour that I should not be wronged, but that he would also help me to a good, sober person of his acquaintance, who was a clerk in such business too, though not in their house, whose judgment was good, and whose honesty I might depend upon; "for," added he, "I will answer for him, and for every step he takes; if he wrongs you, madam, of one farthing, it shall lie at my door; and he delights to assist people in such cases — he does it as an act of charity."

I was a little at a stand at this discourse; but after some pause I told him I had rather have depended upon him, because I had found him honest, but if that could not be, I would take his recommendation sooner than any one's else. "I dare say, madam," says he, "that you will be as well satisfied with my friend as with me, and he is thoroughly able to assist you, which I am not." It seems he had his hands full of the business of the bank, and had engaged to meddle with no other business than that of his office: he added, that his friend should take

nothing of me for his advice or assistance, and this indeed encouraged me.

He appointed the same evening, after the bank was shut, for me to meet him and his friend. As soon as I saw his friend, and he began but to talk of the affair, I was fully satisfied I had a very honest man to deal with; his countenance spoke it; and his character, as I heard afterwards, was everywhere so good, that I had no room for any more doubts upon me.

After the first meeting, in which I only said what I had said before, he appointed me to come the next day, telling me I might in the meantime satisfy myself of him by inquiry, which, however, I knew not how to do, having no acquaintance myself.

Accordingly I met him the next day, when I entered more freely with him into my case. I told him my circumstances at large: that I was a widow come over from America, perfectly desolate and friendless; that I had a little money, and but a little, and was almost distracted for fear of losing it, having no friend in the world to trust with the management of it; that I was going into the north of England to live cheap, that my stock might not waste; that I would willingly lodge my money in the bank, but that I durst not carry the bills about me; and how to correspond about it, or with whom, I knew not.

He told me I might lodge the money in the bank as an account, and its being entered in the books would entitle me to the money at any time; and if I was in the north I might draw bills on the cashier, and receive it when I would; but that then it would be esteemed as running cash, and the bank would give no interest for it; that I might buy stock with it, and so it would lie in store for me, but that then if I wanted to dispose of it, I must come up to town to transfer it, and even it would be with some difficulty I should receive the half-yearly dividend, unless I was here in person, or had some friend I could trust with having the stock in his name to do it for me, and that would have the same difficulty in it as before; and with that he looked hard at me and smiled a little. At last says he, "Why do you not get a head-steward, madam, that may take you and your money together, and then you would have the trouble taken off of your hands?" "Ay, sir, and the money too, it may be," said I; "for truly I find the hazard that way is as much as 't is t' other way," but I remember I said secretly to myself, "I wish you would ask me the question fairly; I would consider very seriously on it before I said No."

He went on a good way with me, and I thought once or twice he was in earnest, but, to my real affliction, I found at last he had a wife; but when he owned he had a wife he shook his head, and said

with some concern, that indeed he had a wife, and no wife. I began to think he had been in the condition of my late lover, and that his wife had been lunatic, or some such thing. However, we had not much more discourse at that time, but he told me he was in too much hurry of business then, but that if I would come home to his house after their business was over, he would consider what might be done for me, to put my affairs in a posture of security. I told him I would come, and desired to know where he lived. He gave me a direction in writing, and when he gave it me he read it to me, and said, "There 't is, madam, if you dare trust yourself with me." "Yes, sir," said I, "I believe I may venture to trust you with myself, for you have a wife, you say, and I don't want a husband; besides, I dare trust you with my money, which is all I have in the world, and if that were gone, I may trust myself anywhere."

He said some things in jest that were very handsome and mannerly, and would have pleased me very well if they had been in earnest; but that passed over, I took the directions, and appointed to be at his house at seven o'clock the same evening.

When I came he made several proposals for my placing my money in the bank, in order to my having interest for it; but still some difficulty or other came in the way, which he objected as not safe; and I

found such a sincere disinterested honesty in him, that I began to think I had certainly found the honest man I wanted, and that I could never put myself into better hands; so I told him with a great deal of frankness that I had never met with a man or woman yet that I could trust, or in whom I could think myself safe, but that I saw he was so disinterestedly concerned for my safety, that I would freely trust him with the management of that little I had, if he would accept to be steward for a poor widow that could give him no salary.

He smiled, and, standing up, with great respect saluted me. He told me he could not but take it very kindly that I had so good an opinion of him; that he would not deceive me; that he would do anything in his power to serve me, and expect no salary; but that he could not by any means accept of a trust that might bring him to be suspected of self-interest, and that if I should die he might have disputes with my executors, which he should be very loth to encumber himself with.

I told him if those were all his objections I would soon remove them, and convince him that there was not the least room for any difficulty; for that, first, as for suspecting him, if ever, now was the time to suspect him, and not to put the trust into his hands; and whenever I did suspect him, he could but throw it up then, and refuse to go on. Then, as to execu-

tors, I assured him I had no heirs, nor any relations in England, and I would have neither heirs or executors but himself, unless I should alter my condition, and then his trust and trouble should cease together, which, however, I had no prospect of yet; but I told him if I died as I was, it should be all his own, and he would deserve it by being so faithful to me, as I was satisfied he would be.

He changed his countenance at this discourse, and asked me how I came to have so much goodwill for him; and looking very much pleased, said he might very lawfully wish he was single for my sake. I smiled, and told him, that as he was not, my offer could have no design upon him, and to wish was not to be allowed, 't was criminal to his wife.

He told me I was wrong; "for," says he, "as I said before, I have a wife and no wife, and 't would be no sin to wish her hanged." "I know nothing of your circumstances that way, sir," said I; "but it cannot be innocent to wish your wife dead." "I tell you," says he again, "she is a wife and no wife; you don't know what I am, or what she is."

"That 's true," said I, "sir, I don't know what you are; but I believe you to be an honest man, and that 's the cause of all my confidence in you."

"Well, well," says he, "and so I am; but I am something else too, madam; for," says he, "to be plain with you, I am a cuckold, and she is a whore."

He spoke it in a kind of jest, but it was with such an awkward smile, that I perceived it stuck very close to him, and he looked dismally when he said it.

"That alters the case indeed, sir," said I, "as to that part you were speaking of; but a cuckold, you know, may be an honest man; it does not alter that case at all. Besides, I think," said I, "since your wife is so dishonest to you, you are too honest to her to own her for your wife; but that," said I, "is what I have nothing to do with." "Nay," says he, "I do think to clear my hands of her; for, to be plain with you, madam," added he, "I am no contented cuckold neither: on the other hand, I assure you it provokes me to the highest degree, but I can't help myself; she that will be a whore, will be a whore."

I waived the discourse, and began to talk of my business; but I found he could not have done with it, so I let him alone, and he went on to tell me all the circumstances of his case, too long to relate here; particularly, that having been out of England some time before he came to the post he was in, she had had two children in the meantime by an officer in the army; and that when he came to England, and, upon her submission, took her again, and maintained her very well, yet she ran away from him with a linen-draper's apprentice, robbed him of what she could come at, and continued to live from him still; "so that, madam," says he, "she is a whore not by

necessity, which is the common bait, but by inclination, and for the sake of the vice."

Well, I pitied him, and wished him well rid of her, and still would have talked of my business, but it would not do. At last he looked steadily at me. "Look you, madam," says he, "you came to ask advice of me, and I will serve you as faithfully as if you were my own sister; but I must turn the tables, since you oblige me to do it, and are so friendly to me, and I think I must ask advice of you. Tell me, what must a poor abused fellow do with a whore? What can I do to do myself justice upon her?"

"Alas! sir," says I, "'t is a case too nice for me to advise in, but it seems to me she has run away from you, so you are rid of her fairly; what can you desire more?" "Ay, she is gone indeed," said he, "but I am not clear of her for all that." "That 's true," says I; "she may indeed run you into debt, but the law has furnished you with methods to prevent that also; you may cry her down, as they call it."

"No, no," says he, "that is not the case; I have taken care of all that; 't is not that part that I speak of, but I would be rid of her that I might marry again."

"Well, sir," says I, "then you must divorce her; if you can prove what you say, you may certainly get that done, and then you are free."

"That 's very tedious and expensive," says he.

"Why," says I, "if you can get any woman you like to take your word, I suppose your wife would not dispute the liberty with you that she takes herself."

"Ay," says he, "but it would be hard to bring an honest woman to do that; and for the other sort," says he, "I have had enough of her to meddle with any more whores."

It occurred to me presently, "I would have taken your word with all my heart, if you had but asked me the question;" but that was to myself. To him I replied, "Why, you shut the door against any honest woman accepting you, for you condemn all that should venture upon you, and conclude that a woman that takes you now can't be honest."

"Why," says he, "I wish you would satisfy me that an honest woman would take me; I 'd venture it;" and then turns short upon me, "Will you take me, madam?"

"That 's not a fair question," says I, "after what you have said; however, lest you should think I wait only a recantation of it, I shall answer you plainly, No, not I; my business is of another kind with you; and I did not expect you would have turned my serious application to you, in my distracted case, into a comedy."

"Why, madam," says he, "my case is as distracted as yours can be, and I stand in as much

need of advice as you do, for I think if I have not relief somewhere I shall be mad myself, and I know not what course to take, I protest to you."

"Why, sir," says I, "'t is easier to give advice in your case than mine." "Speak, then," says he, "I beg of you, for now you encourage me."

"Why," says I, "if your case is so plain, you may be legally divorced, and then you may find honest women enough to ask the question of fairly; the sex is not so scarce that you can want a wife."

"Well, then," said he, "I am in earnest; I'll take your advice; but shall I ask you one question seriously beforehand?"

"Any question," said I; "but that you did before."

"No, that answer will not do," said he, "for, in short, that is the question I shall ask."

"You may ask what questions you please, but you have my answer to that already," said I; "besides, sir," said I, "can you think so ill of me as that I would give any answer to such a question beforehand? Can any woman alive believe you in earnest, or think you design anything but to banter her?"

"Well, well," says he, "I do not banter you, I am in earnest; consider of it."

"But, sir," says I, a little gravely, "I came to you about my own business; I beg of you to let me know what you will advise me to do?"

"I will be prepared," says he, "against you come again."

"Nay," says I, "you have forbid my coming any more."

"Why so?" said he, and looked a little surprised.

"Because," said I, "you can't expect I should visit you on the account you talk of."

"Well," says he, "you shall promise to come again, however, and I will not say any more of it till I have the divorce. But I desire you'll prepare to be better conditioned when that's done, for you shall be the woman, or I will not be divorced at all; I owe it to your unlooked-for kindness, if to nothing else, but I have other reasons too."

He could not have said anything in the world that pleased me better; however, I knew that the way to secure him was to stand off while the thing was so remote, as it appeared to be, and that it was time enough to accept of it when he was able to perform it. So I said very respectfully to him, it was time enough to consider of these things when he was in a condition to talk of them; in the meantime, I told him, I was going a great way from him, and he would find objects enough to please him better. We broke off here for the present, and he made me promise him to come again the next day, for my own business, which after some pressing I did; though had he seen farther into me, I wanted no pressing on that account.

I came the next evening accordingly, and brought my maid with me, to let him see that I kept a maid. He would have had me let the maid have stayed, but I would not, but ordered her aloud to come for me again about nine o'clock. But he forbid that, and told me he would see me safe home, which I was not very well pleased with, supposing he might do that to know where I lived, and inquire into my character and circumstances. However, I ventured that, for all the people there knew of me was to my advantage; and all the character he had of me was, that I was a woman of fortune, and that I was a very modest, sober body; which, whether true or not in the main, yet you may see how necessary it is for all women who expect anything in the world, to preserve the character of their virtue, even when perhaps they may have sacrificed the thing itself.

I found, and was not a little pleased with it, that he had provided a supper for me. I found also he lived very handsomely, and had a house very handsomely furnished, and which I was rejoiced at indeed, for I looked upon it as all my own.

We had now a second conference upon the subject-matter of the last. He laid his business very home indeed; he protested his affection to me, and indeed I had no room to doubt it; he declared that it began from the first moment I talked with him, and long before I had mentioned leaving my effects

with him. "'T is no matter when it began," thought I; "if it will but hold, 't will be well enough." He then told me how much the offer I had made of trusting him with my effects had engaged him. "So I intended it should," thought I, "but then I thought you had been a single man too." After we had supped, I observed he pressed me very hard to drink two or three glasses of wine, which, however, I declined, but drank one glass or two. He then told me he had a proposal to make to me, which I should promise him I would not take ill if I should not grant it. I told him I hoped he would make no dishonourable proposal to me, especially in his own house, and that if it was such, I desired he would not mention it, that I might not be obliged to offer any resentment to him that did not become the respect I professed for him, and the trust I had placed in him, in coming to his house; and begged of him he would give me leave to go away, and accordingly began to put on my gloves and prepare to be gone, though at the same time I no more intended it than he intended to let me.

Well, he importuned me not to talk of going; he assured me he was very far from offering any such thing to me that was dishonourable, and if I thought so, he would choose to say no more of it.

That part I did not relish at all. I told him I was ready to hear anything that he had to say, de-

pending that he would say nothing unworthy of himself, or unfit for me to hear. Upon this, he told me his proposal was this: that I would marry him, though he had not yet obtained the divorce from the whore his wife; and to satisfy me that he meant honourably, he would promise not to desire me to live with him, or go to bed to him till the divorce was obtained. My heart said yes to this offer at first word, but it was necessary to play the hypocrite a little more with him; so I seemed to decline the motion with some warmth as unfair, told him that such a proposal could be of no signification, but to entangle us both in great difficulties; for if he should not at last obtain the divorce, yet we could not dissolve the marriage, neither could we proceed in it; so that if he was disappointed in the divorce, I left him to consider what a condition we should both be in.

In short, I carried on the argument against this so far, that I convinced him it was not a proposal that had any sense in it; then he went from it to another, viz., that I would sign and seal a contract with him, conditioning to marry him as soon as the divorce was obtained, and to be void if he could not get it.

I told him that was more rational than the other; but as this was the first time that ever I could imagine him weak enough to be in earnest, I did not use to say yes at first asking; I would consider of it.

I played with this lover as an angler does with a trout: I found I had him fast on the hook; so I jested with his new proposal, and put him off. I told him he knew little of me, and bade him inquire about me; I let him also go home with me to my lodging, though I would not ask him to go in, for I told him it was not decent.

In short, I ventured to avoid signing a contract, and the reason why I did it was because the lady that had invited me to go with her into Lancashire insisted so positively upon it, and promised me such great fortunes, and fine things there, that I was tempted to go and try. "Perhaps," said I, "I may mend myself very much;" and then I made no scruple of quitting my honest citizen, whom I was not so much in love with as not to leave him for a richer.

In a word, I avoided a contract; but told him I would go into the north, that he would know where to write to me by the business I had intrusted him with; that I would give him a sufficient pledge of my respect for him, for I would leave almost all I had in the world in his hands; and I would thus far give him my word, that as soon as he had sued out the divorce, if he would send me an account of it, I would come up to London, and that then we would talk seriously of the matter.

It was a base design I went with, that I must con-

fess, though I was invited thither with a design much worse, as the sequel will discover. Well, I went with my friend, as I called her, into Lancashire. All the way we went she caressed me with the utmost appearance of a sincere, undissembled affection; treated me, except my coach-hire, all the way; and her brother brought a gentleman's coach to Warrington to receive us, and we were carried from thence to Liverpool with as much ceremony as I could desire.

We were also entertained at a merchant's house in Liverpool three or four days very handsomely; I forbear to tell his name, because of what followed. Then she told me she would carry me to an uncle's house of hers where we should be nobly entertained; and her uncle, as she called him, sent a coach and four horses for us, and we were carried near forty miles I know not whither.

We came, however, to a gentleman's seat, where was a numerous family, a large park, extraordinary company indeed, and where she was called cousin. I told her, if she had resolved to bring me into such company as this, she should have let me have furnished myself with better clothes. The ladies took notice of that, and told me very genteelly they did not value people in their own country so much by their clothes as they did in London; that their cousin had fully informed them of my quality, and that I did not want clothes to set me off; in short,

they entertained me not like what I was, but like what they thought I had been, namely, a widow lady of a great fortune.

The first discovery I made here was, that the family were all Roman Catholics, and the cousin too; however, nobody in the world could behave better to me, and I had all the civility shown that I could have had if I had been of their opinion. The truth is, I had not so much principle of any kind as to be nice in point of religion; and I presently learned to speak favourably of the Romish Church; particularly, I told them I saw little but the prejudice of education in all the differences that were among Christians about religion, and if it had so happened that my father had been a Roman Catholic, I doubted not but I should have been as well pleased with their religion as my own.

This obliged them in the highest degree, and as I was besieged day and night with good company and pleasant discourse, so I had two or three old ladies that lay at me upon the subject of religion too. I was so complaisant that I made no scruple to be present at their mass, and to conform to all their gestures as they showed me the pattern, but I would not come too cheap; so that I only in the main encouraged them to expect that I would turn Roman Catholic if I was instructed in the Catholic doctrine, as they called it; and so the matter rested.

I stayed here about six weeks; and then my conductor led me back to a country village, about six miles from Liverpool, where her brother, as she called him, came to visit me in his own chariot, with two footmen in a good livery; and the next thing was to make love to me. As it happened to me, one would think I could not have been cheated, and indeed I thought so myself, having a safe card at home, which I resolved not to quit unless I could mend myself very much. However, in all appearance this brother was a match worth my listening to, and the least his estate was valued at was £1000 a year, but the sister said it was worth £1500 a year, and lay most of it in Ireland.

I that was a great fortune, and passed for such, was above being asked how much my estate was; and my false friend, taking it upon a foolish hearsay, had raised it from £500 to £5000, and by the time she came into the country she called it £15,000. The Irishman, for such I understood him to be, was stark mad at this bait; in short, he courted me, made me presents, and ran in debt like a madman for the expenses of his courtship. He had, to give him his due, the appearance of an extraordinary fine gentleman; he was tall, well-shaped, and had an extraordinary address; talked as naturally of his park and his stables, of his horses, his gamekeepers, his woods, his tenants, and his servants, as if he had

been in a mansion-house, and I had seen them all about me.

He never so much as asked me about my fortune or estate, but assured me that when we came to Dublin he would jointure me in £600 a year in good land, and that he would enter into a deed of settlement, or contract, here for the performance of it.

This was such language indeed as I had not been used to, and I was here beaten out of all my measures; I had a she-devil in my bosom, every hour telling me how great her brother lived. One time she would come for my orders, how I would have my coach painted, and how lined; and another time, what clothes my page should wear: in short, my eyes were dazzled, I had now lost my power of saying no, and, to cut the story short, I consented to be married; but to be more private, we were carried farther into the country, and married by a priest, which I was assured would marry us as effectually us a Church of England parson.

I cannot say but I had some reflections in this affair upon the dishonourable forsaking my faithful citizen, who loved me sincerely, and who was endeavouring to quit himself of a scandalous whore by whom he had been barbarously used, and promised himself infinite happiness in his new choice; which choice was now giving up herself to another in a manner almost as scandalous as hers could be.

But the glittering show of a great estate and of fine things which the deceived creature that was now my deceiver represented every hour to my imagination hurried me away, and gave me no time to think of London, or of anything there, much less of the obligation I had to a person of infinitely more real merit than what was now before me.

But the thing was done; I was now in the arms of my new spouse, who appeared still the same as before; great even to magnificence, and nothing less than a thousand pounds a year could support the ordinary equipage he appeared in.

After we had been married about a month, he began to talk of my going to West Chester in order to embark for Ireland. However, he did not hurry me, for we stayed near three weeks longer, and then he sent to Chester for a coach to meet us at the Black Rock, as they call it, over against Liverpool. Thither we went in a fine boat they call a pinnace, with six oars; his servants, and horses, and baggage going in a ferry-boat. He made his excuse to me, that he had no acquaintance at Chester, but he would go before and get some handsome apartments for me at a private house. I asked him how long we should stay at Chester. He said, not at all, any longer than one night or two, but he would immediately hire a coach to go to Holyhead. Then I told him he should by no means give himself the

trouble to get private lodgings for one night or two, for that Chester being a great place, I made no doubt that there would be very good inns and accommodation enough; so we lodged at an inn not far from the cathedral; I forget what sign it was at.

Here my spouse, talking of my going to Ireland, asked me if I had no affairs to settle at London before we went off. I told him no, not of any great consequence, but what might be done as well by letter from Dublin. "Madam," says he very respectfully, "I suppose the greatest part of your estate, which my sister tells me is most of it in money in the Bank of England, lies secure enough; but in case it required transferring, or any way altering its property, it might be necessary to go up to London and settle those things before we went over."

I seemed to look strange at it, and told him I knew not what he meant; that I had no effects in the Bank of England that I knew of, and I hoped he could not say that I had ever told him I had. No, he said, I had not told him so, but his sister had said the greatest part of my estate lay there; "and I only mentioned it, my dear," said he, "that if there was any occasion to settle it, or order anything about it, we might not be obliged to the hazard and trouble of another voyage back again;" for he added, that he did not care to venture me too much upon the sea.

I was surprised at this talk, and began to consider what the meaning of it must be; and it presently occurred to me, that my friend, who called him brother, had represented me in colours which were not my due; and I thought that I would know the bottom of it before I went out of England, and before I should put myself into I know not whose hands in a strange country.

Upon this I called his sister into my chamber the next morning, and letting her know the discourse her brother and I had been upon, I conjured her to tell me what she had said to him, and upon what foot it was that she had made this marriage. She owned that she had told him that I was a great fortune, and said that she was told so at London. "Told so?" says I warmly; "did I ever tell you so?" No, she said, it was true I never did tell her so, but I had said several times that what I had was in my own disposal. "I did so," returned I very quick, "but I never told you I had anything called a fortune; no, that I had £100, or the value of £100, in the world. And how did it consist with my being a fortune," said I, "that I should come here into the north of England with you, only upon the account of living cheap?" At these words, which I spoke warm and high, my husband came into the room, and I desired him to come in and sit down, for I had something of moment to say

before them both, which it was absolutely necessary he should hear.

He looked a little disturbed at the assurance with which I seemed to speak it, and came and sat down by me, having first shut the door; upon which I began, for I was very much provoked, and turning myself to him, "I am afraid," says I, "my dear" (for I spoke with kindness on his side), "that you have a very great abuse put upon you, and an injury done you never to be repaired in your marrying me, which, however, as I have had no hand in it, I desire I may be fairly acquitted of it, and that the blame may lie where it ought and nowhere else, for I wash my hands of every part of it." "What injury can be done me, my dear," says he, "in marrying you? I hope it is to my honour and advantage every way." "I will soon explain it to you," says I, "and I fear there will be no reason to think yourself well used; but I will convince you, my dear," says I again, "that I have had no hand in it."

He looked now scared and wild, and began, I believed, to suspect what followed; however, looking towards me, and saying only, "Go on," he sat silent, as if to hear what I had more to say; so I went on. "I asked you last night," said I, speaking to him, "if ever I made any boast to you of my estate, or ever told you I had any estate in the Bank of England or anywhere else, and you owned I

had not, as is most true; and I desire you will tell me here, before your sister, if ever I gave you any reason from me to think so, or that ever we had any discourse about it;" and he owned again I had not, but said I had appeared always as a woman of fortune, and he depended on it that I was so, and hoped he was not deceived. "I am not inquiring whether you have been deceived," said I; "I fear you have, and I too; but I am clearing myself from being concerned in deceiving you.

"I have been now asking your sister if ever I told her of any fortune or estate I had, or gave her any particulars of it; and she owns I never did. And pray, madam," said I, "be so just to me, to charge me if you can, if ever I pretended to you that I had an estate; and why, if I had, should I ever come down into this country with you on purpose to spare that little I had, and live cheap?" She could not deny one word, but said she had been told in London that I had a very great fortune, and that it lay in the Bank of England.

"And now, dear sir," said I, turning myself to my new spouse again, "be so just to me as to tell me who has abused both you and me so much as to make you believe I was a fortune, and prompt you to court me to this marriage?" He could not speak a word, but pointed to her; and, after some more pause, flew out in the most furious passion that

ever I saw a man in [in] my life, cursing her, and calling her all the whores and hard names he could think of; and that she had ruined him, declaring that she had told him I had £15,000, and that she was to have £500 of him for procuring this match for him. He then added, directing his speech to me, that she was none of his sister, but had been his whore for two years before; that she had had £100 of him in part of this bargain, and that he was utterly undone if things were as I said; and in his raving he swore he would let her heart's blood out immediately, which frightened her and me too. She cried, said she had been told so in the house where I lodged. But this aggravated him more than before, that she should put so far upon him, and run things such a length upon no other authority than a hearsay; and then turning to me again, said very honestly, he was afraid we were both undone; "for, to be plain, my dear, I have no estate," says he; "what little I had, this devil has made me run out in putting me into this equipage." She took the opportunity of his being earnest in talking with me, and got out of the room, and I never saw her more.

I was confounded now as much as he, and knew not what to say. I thought many ways that I had the worst of it; but his saying he was undone, and that he had no estate neither, put me into a mere distraction. "Why," says I to him, "this has been a

hellish juggle, for we are married here upon the foot of a double fraud: you are undone by the disappointment, it seems; and if I had had a fortune I had been cheated too, for you say you have nothing."

"You would indeed have been cheated, my dear," says he, "but you would not have been undone, for £15,000 would have maintained us both very handsomely in this country; and I had resolved to have dedicated every groat of it to you; I would not have wronged you of a shilling, and the rest I would have made up in my affection to you, and tenderness of you, as long as I lived."

This was very honest indeed, and I really believe he spoke as he intended, and that he was a man that was as well qualified to make me happy, as to his temper and behaviour, as any man ever was; but his having no estate, and being run into debt on this ridiculous account in the country, made all the prospect dismal and dreadful, and I knew not what to say or what to think.

I told him it was very unhappy that so much love and so much good nature as I discovered in him should be thus precipitated into misery; that I saw nothing before us but ruin; for, as to me, it was my unhappiness, that what little I had was not able to relieve us a week, and with that I pulled out a bank-bill of £20 and eleven guineas, which I told him I had saved out of my little income, and that by the

account that creature had given me of the way of living in that country, I expected it would maintain me three or four years ; that if it was taken from me, I was left destitute, and he knew what the condition of a woman must be if she had no money in her pocket ; however, I told him, if he would take it, there it was.

He told me with great concern, and I thought I saw tears in his eyes, that he would not touch it ; that he abhorred the thoughts of stripping me and making me miserable ; that he had fifty guineas left, which was all he had in the world, and he pulled it out and threw it down on the table, bidding me take it, though he were to starve for want of it.

I returned, with the same concern for him, that I could not bear to hear him talk so ; that on the contrary, if he could propose any probable method of living, I would do anything that became me, and that I would live as narrow as he could desire.

He begged of me to talk no more at that rate, for it would make him distracted ; he said he was bred a gentleman, though he was reduced to a low fortune, and that there was but one way left which he could think of, and that would not do, unless I could answer him one question, which, however, he said he would not press me to. I told him I would answer it honestly ; whether it would be to his satisfaction or no, that I could not tell.

"Why, then, my dear, tell me plainly," says he, "will the little you have keep us together in any figure, or in any station or place, or will it not?"

It was my happiness that I had not discovered myself or my circumstances at all — no, not so much as my name; and seeing there was nothing to be expected from him, however good-humoured and however honest he seemed to be, but to live on what I knew would soon be wasted, I resolved to conceal everything but the bank bill and eleven guineas; and I would have been very glad to have lost that and have been set down where he took me up. I had indeed another bank bill about me of £30, which was the whole of what I brought with me, as well to subsist on in the country, as not knowing what might offer; because this creature, the go-between that had thus betrayed us both, had made me believe strange things of marrying to my advantage, and I was not willing to be without money, whatever might happen. This bill I concealed, and that made me the freer of the rest, in consideration of his circumstances, for I really pitied him heartily.

But to return to this question, I told him I never willingly deceived him, and I never would. I was very sorry to tell him that the little I had would not subsist us; that it was not sufficient to subsist me alone in the south country, and that this was the reason that made me put myself into the hands of that

woman who called him brother, she having assured me that I might board very handsomely at a town called Manchester, where I had not yet been, for about £6 a year; and my whole income not being above £15 a year, I thought I might live easy upon it, and wait for better things.

He shook his head and remained silent, and a very melancholy evening we had; however, we supped together and lay together that night, and when we had almost supped he looked a little better and more cheerful, and called for a bottle of wine. "Come, my dear," says he, "though the case is bad, it is to no purpose to be dejected. Come, be as easy as you can; I will endeavour to find out some way or other to live; if you can but subsist yourself, that is better than nothing. I must try the world again; a man ought to think like a man; to be discouraged is to yield to the misfortune." With this he filled a glass, and drank to me, holding my hand all the while the wine went down, and protesting his main concern was for me.

It was really a true, gallant spirit he was of, and it was the more grievous to me. 'T is something of relief even to be undone by a man of honour, rather than by a scoundrel; but here the greatest disappointment was on his side, for he had really spent a great deal of money, and it was very remarkable on what poor terms she proceeded. First, the baseness

of the creature herself is to be observed, who, for the getting £100 herself, could be content to let him spend three or four more, though perhaps it was all he had in the world, and more than all; when she had not the least ground more than a little tea-table chat, to say that I had any estate, or was a fortune, or the like. It is true the design of deluding a woman of fortune, if I had been so, was base enough; the putting the face of great things upon poor circumstances was a fraud, and bad enough; but the case a little differed too, and that in his favour, for he was not a rake that made a trade to delude women, and, as some have done, get six or seven fortunes after one another, and then rifle and run away from them; but he was already a gentleman, unfortunate and low, but had lived well; and though, if I had had a fortune, I should have been enraged at the slut for betraying me, yet really for the man, a fortune would not have been ill bestowed on him, for he was a lovely person indeed, of generous principles, good sense, and of abundance of good humour.

We had a great deal of close conversation that night, for we neither of us slept much; he was as penitent, for having put all those cheats upon me, as if it had been felony, and that he was going to execution; he offered me again every shilling of the money he had about him, and said he would go into the army and seek for more.

I asked him why he would be so unkind to carry me into Ireland, when I might suppose he could not have subsisted me there. He took me in his arms. "My dear," said he, "I never designed to go to Ireland at all, much less to have carried you thither, but came hither to be out of the observation of the people, who had heard what I pretended to, and that nobody might ask me for money before I was furnished to supply them."

"But, where then," said I, "were we to have gone next?"

"Why, my dear," said he, "I 'll confess the whole scheme to you as I had laid it: I purposed here to ask you something about your estate, as you see I did, and when you, as I expected you would, had entered into some account of the particulars, I would have made an excuse to have put off our voyage to Ireland for some time, and so have gone for London. Then, my dear," says he, "I resolved to have confessed all the circumstances of my own affairs to you, and let you know I had indeed made use of these artifices to obtain your consent to marry me, but had now nothing to do but to ask your pardon, and to tell you how abundantly I would endeavour to make you forget what was past, by the felicity of the days to come."

"Truly," said I to him, "I find you would soon have conquered me; and it is my affliction now, that

I am not in a condition to let you see how easily I should have been reconciled to you, and have passed by all the tricks you had put upon me, in recompense of so much good humour. But, my dear," said I, "what can we do now? We are both undone; and what better are we for our being reconciled, seeing we have nothing to live on?"

We proposed a great many things, but nothing could offer where there was nothing to begin with. He begged me at last to talk no more of it, for, he said, I would break his heart; so we talked of other things a little, till at last he took a husband's leave of me, and so went to sleep.

He rose before me in the morning; and indeed having lain awake almost all night, I was very sleepy, and lay till near eleven o'clock. In this time he took his horses, and three servants, and all his linen and baggage, and away he went, leaving a short but moving letter for me on the table, as follows: —

"My Dear, — I am a dog; I have abused you; but I have been drawn in to do it by a base creature, contrary to my principle and the general practice of my life. Forgive me, my dear! I ask your pardon with the greatest sincerity; I am the most miserable of men, in having deluded you. I have been so happy to possess you, and am now so wretched as to be forced to fly from you. Forgive me, my dear; once more I say, forgive me! I am not able to see you ruined by me, and myself unable to support you. Our marriage is

nothing; I shall never be able to see you again; I here discharge you from it; if you can marry to your advantage, do not decline it on my account. I here swear to you on my faith, and on the word of a man of honour, I will never disturb your repose if I should know of it, which, however, is not likely. On the other hand, if you should not marry, and if good fortune should befall me, it shall be all yours, wherever you are.

"I have put some of the stock of money I have left into your pocket; take places for yourself and your maid in the stage-coach, and go for London. I hope it will bear your charges thither, without breaking into your own. Again I sincerely ask your pardon, and will do so as often as I shall ever think of you. Adieu, my dear, for ever! — I am, yours most affectionately,

"J. E."

Nothing that ever befell me in my life sank so deep into my heart as this farewell. I reproached him a thousand times in my thoughts for leaving me, for I would have gone with him through the world, if I had begged my bread. I felt in my pocket, and there I found ten guineas, his gold watch, and two little rings, one a small diamond ring, worth only about £6, and the other a plain gold ring.

I sat down and looked upon these things two hours together, and scarce spoke a word, till my maid interrupted me by telling me my dinner was ready. I ate but little, and after dinner I fell into a violent

fit of crying, every now and then calling him by his name, which was James. "O Jemmy!" said I, "come back, come back. I'll give you all I have; I'll beg, I'll starve with you." And thus I ran raving about the room several times, and then sat down between whiles, and then walked about again, called upon him to come back, and then cried again; and thus I passed the afternoon, till about seven o'clock, when it was near dusk in the evening, being August, when, to my unspeakable surprise, he comes back into the inn, and comes directly up into my chamber.

I was in the greatest confusion imaginable, and so was he too. I could not imagine what should be the occasion of it, and began to be at odds with myself whether to be glad or sorry; but my affection biassed all the rest, and it was impossible to conceal my joy, which was too great for smiles, for it burst out into tears. He was no sooner entered the room, but he ran to me and took me in his arms, holding me fast, and almost stopping my breath with his kisses, but spoke not a word. At length I began. "My dear," said I, "how could you go away from me?" to which he gave no answer, for it was impossible for him to speak.

When our ecstasies were a little over, he told me he was gone above fifteen miles, but it was not in his power to go any farther without coming back to see me again and to take his leave of me once more.

I told him how I had passed my time, and how loud I had called him to come back again. He told me he heard me very plain upon Delamere Forest, at a place about twelve miles off. I smiled. "Nay," says he, "do not think I am in jest, for if ever I heard your voice in my life, I heard you call me aloud, and sometimes I thought I saw you running after me." "Why," said I, "what did I say?" for I had not named the words to him. "You called aloud," says he, "and said, O Jemmy! O Jemmy! come back, come back."

I laughed at him. "My dear," says he, "do not laugh, for, depend upon it, I heard your voice as plain as you hear mine now; if you please, I'll go before a magistrate and make oath of it." I then began to be amazed and surprised, and indeed frighted, and told him what I had really done, and how I had called after him, as above. When we had amused ourselves a while about this, I said to him, "Well, you shall go away from me no more; I'll go all over the world with you rather." He told me it would be a very difficult thing for him to leave me, but since it must be, he hoped I would make it as easy to me as I could; but as for him, it would be his destruction, that he foresaw.

However, he told me that he had considered he had left me to travel to London alone, which was a long journey; and that as he might as well go that way

as any way else, he was resolved to see me hither, or near it; and if he did go away then without taking his leave, I should not take it ill of him; and this he made me promise.

He told me how he had dismissed his three servants, sold their horses, and sent the fellows away to seek their fortunes, and all in a little time, at a town on the road, I know not where; "and," says he, "it cost me some tears all alone by myself, to think how much happier they were than their master, for they could go to the next gentleman's house to see for a service, whereas," said he, "I knew not whither to go, or what to do with myself."

I told him I was so completely miserable in parting with him, that I could not be worse; and that now he was come again, I would not go from him, if he would take me with him, let him go whither he would. And in the meantime I agreed that we would go together to London; but I could not be brought to consent he should go away at last and not take his leave of me, but told him, jesting, that if he did, I would call him back again as loud as I did before. Then I pulled out his watch, and gave it him back, and his two rings, and his ten guineas; but he would not take them, which made me very much suspect that he resolved to go off upon the road, and leave me.

The truth is, the circumstances he was in, the pas-

sionate expressions of his letter, the kind, gentlemanly treatment I had from him in all the affair, with the concern he showed for me in it, his manner of parting with that large share which he gave me of his little stock left — all these had joined to make such impressions on me, that I could not bear the thoughts of parting with him.

Two days after this we quitted Chester, I in the stage-coach, and he on horseback. I dismissed my maid at Chester. He was very much against my being without a maid, but she being hired in the country (keeping no servant at London), I told him it would have been barbarous to have taken the poor wench, and have turned her away as soon as I came to town; and it would also have been a needless charge on the road; so I satisfied him, and he was easy on that score.

He came with me as far as Dunstable, within thirty miles of London, and then he told me fate and his own misfortunes obliged him to leave me, and that it was not convenient for him to go to London, for reasons which it was of no value to me to know, and I saw him preparing to go. The stage-coach we were in did not usually stop at Dunstable, but I desiring it for a quarter of an hour, they were content to stand at an inn-door a while, and we went into the house.

Being in the inn, I told him I had but one favour

more to ask him, and that was, that since he could not go any farther, he would give me leave to stay a week or two in the town with him, that we might in that time think of something to prevent such a ruinous thing to us both as a final separation would be; and that I had something of moment to offer to him, which perhaps he might find practicable to our advantage.

This was too reasonable a proposal to be denied, so he called the landlady of the house, and told her his wife was taken ill, and so ill that she could not think of going any farther in a stage-coach, which had tired her almost to death, and asked if she could not get us a lodging for two or three days in a private house, where I might rest me a little, for the journey had been too much for me. The landlady, a good sort of a woman, well-bred, and very obliging, came immediately to see me; told me she had two or three very good rooms in a part of the house quite out of the noise, and if I saw them she did not doubt but I would like them, and I should have one of her maids, that should do nothing else but wait on me. This was so very kind, that I could not but accept of it; so I went to look on the rooms, and liked them very well, and indeed they were extraordinarily furnished, and very pleasant lodgings; so we paid the stage-coach, took out our baggage, and resolved to stay here a while.

Here I told him I would live with him now till all my money was spent, but would not let him spend a shilling of his own. We had some kind squabble about that, but I told him it was the last time I was like to enjoy his company, and I desired that he would let me be master in that thing only, and he should govern in everything else; so he acquiesced.

Here one evening, taking a walk into the fields, I told him I would now make the proposal to him I had told him of; accordingly I related to him how I had lived in Virginia, that I had a mother I believed was alive there still, though my husband was dead some years. I told him that had not my effects miscarried, which, by the way, I magnified pretty much, I might have been fortune good enough to him to have kept us from being parted in this manner. Then I entered into the manner of people settling in those countries, how they had a quantity of land given them by the constitution of the place; and if not, that it might be purchased at so easy a rate that it was not worth naming.

I then gave him a full and distinct account of the nature of planting; how with carrying over but two or three hundred pounds' value in English goods, with some servants and tools, a man of application would presently lay a foundation for a family, and in a few years would raise an estate.

I let him into the nature of the product of the

earth, how the ground was cured and prepared, and what the usual increase of it was; and demonstrated to him, that in a very few years, with such a beginning, we should be as certain of being rich as we were now certain of being poor.

He was surprised at my discourse; for we made it the whole subject of our conversation for near a week together, in which time I laid it down in black and white, as we say, that it was morally impossible, with a supposition of any reasonable good conduct, but that we must thrive there and do very well.

Then I told him what measures I would take to raise such a sum as £300, or thereabouts; and I argued with him how good a method it would be to put an end to our misfortunes, and restore our circumstances in the world, to what we had both expected; and I added, that after seven years we might be in a posture to leave our plantation in good hands, and come over again and receive the income of it, and live here and enjoy it; and I gave him examples of some that had done so, and lived now in very good figure in London.

In short, I pressed him so to it, that he almost agreed to it, but still something or other broke it off; till at last he turned the tables, and began to talk almost to the same purpose of Ireland.

He told me that a man that could confine himself to a country life, and that could but find stock to

enter upon any land, should have farms there for £50 a year, as good as were let here for £200 a year; that the produce was such, and so rich the land, that if much was not laid up, we were sure to live as handsomely upon it as a gentleman of £3000 a year could do in England; and that he had laid a scheme to leave me in London, and go over and try; and if he found he could lay a handsome foundation of living, suitable to the respect he had for me, as he doubted not he should do, he would come over and fetch me.

I was dreadfully afraid that upon such a proposal he would have taken me at my word, viz., to turn my little income into money, and let him carry it over into Ireland and try his experiment with it; but he was too just to desire it, or to have accepted it if I had offered it; and he anticipated me in that, for he added, that he would go and try his fortune that way, and if he found he could do anything at it to live, then by adding mine to it when I went over, we should live like ourselves; but that he would not hazard a shilling of mine till he had made the experiment with a little, and he assured me that if he found nothing to be done in Ireland, he would then come to me and join in my project for Virginia.

He was so earnest upon his project being to be tried first, that I could not withstand him; however, he promised to let me hear from him in a very little

time after his arriving there, to let me know whether his prospect answered his design, that if there was not a probability of success, I might take the occasion to prepare for our other voyage, and then, he assured me, he would go with me to America with all his heart.

I could bring him to nothing further than this, and which entertained us near a month, during which I enjoyed his company, which was the most entertaining that ever I met with in my life before. In this time he let me into part of the story of his own life, which was indeed surprising, and full of an infinite variety, sufficient to fill up a much brighter history, for its adventures and incidents, than any I ever saw in print; but I shall have occasion to say more of him hereafter.

We parted at last, though with the utmost reluctance on my side; and indeed he took his leave very unwillingly too, but necessity obliged him, for his reasons were very good why he would not come to London, as I understood more fully afterwards.

I gave him a direction how to write to me, though still I reserved the grand secret, which was not to let him ever know my true name, who I was, or where to be found; he likewise let me know how to write a letter to him, so that he said he would be sure to receive it.

I came to London the next day after we parted,

but did not go directly to my old lodgings, but for another nameless reason took a private lodging in St. John's Street, or, as it is vulgarly called, St. Jones's, near Clerkenwell; and here being perfectly alone, I had leisure to sit down and reflect seriously upon the last seven months' ramble I had made, for I had been abroad no less. The pleasant hours I had with my last husband I looked back on with an infinite deal of pleasure; but that pleasure was very much lessened when I found some time after that I was really with child.

This was a perplexing thing, because of the difficulty which was before me where I should get leave to lie in, it being one of the nicest things in the world at that time of day for a woman that was a stranger, and had no friends, to be entertained in that circumstance without security, which I had not, neither could I procure any.

I had taken care all this while to preserve a correspondence with my friend at the bank, or rather he took care to correspond with me, for he wrote to me once a week; and though I had not spent my money so fast as to want any from him, yet I often wrote also to let him know I was alive. I had left directions in Lancashire, so that I had these letters conveyed to me; and during my recess at St. Jones's I received a very obliging letter from him, assuring me that his process for a divorce went on with success, though

he met with some difficulties in it that he did not expect.

I was not displeased with the news that his process was more tedious than he expected; for though I was in no condition to have had him yet, not being so foolish to marry him when I knew myself to be with child by another man, as some I know have ventured to do, yet I was not willing to lose him, and, in a word, resolved to have him, if he continued in the same mind, as soon as I was up again; for I saw apparently I should hear no more from my other husband; and as he had all along pressed me to marry, and had assured me he would not be at all disgusted at it, or ever offer to claim me again, so I made no scruple to resolve to do it if I could, and if my other friend stood to his bargain; and I had a great deal of reason to be assured that he would, by the letters he wrote to me, which were the kindest and most obliging that could be.

I now grew big, and the people where I lodged perceived it, and began to take notice of it to me, and as far as civility would allow, intimated that I must think of removing. This put me to extreme perplexity, and I grew very melancholy, for indeed I knew not what course to take; I had money, but no friends, and was like now to have a child upon my hands to keep, which was a difficulty I had never had upon me yet, as my story hitherto makes appear.

In the course of this affair I fell very ill, and my melancholy really increased my distemper. My illness proved at length to be only an ague, but my apprehensions were really that I should miscarry. I should not say apprehensions, for indeed I would have been glad to miscarry, but I could never entertain so much as a thought of taking anything to make me miscarry; I abhorred, I say, so much as the thought of it.

However, speaking of it, the gentlewoman who kept the house proposed to me to send for a midwife. I scrupled it at first, but after some time consented, but told her I had no acquaintance with any midwife, and so left it to her.

It seems the mistress of the house was not so great a stranger to such cases as mine was as I thought at first she had been, as will appear presently; and she sent for a midwife of the right sort — that is to say, the right sort for me.

The woman appeared to be an experienced woman in her business, I mean as a midwife; but she had another calling too, in which she was as expert as most women, if not more. My landlady had told her I was very melancholy, and that she believed that had done me harm; and once, before me, said to her, "Mrs. B——, I believe this lady's trouble is of a kind that is pretty much in your way, and therefore if you can do anything for her, pray do,

for she is a very civil gentlewoman;" and so she went out of the room.

I really did not understand her, but my Mother Midnight began very seriously to explain what she meant, as soon as she was gone. "Madam," says she, "you seem not to understand what your landlady means; and when you do, you need not let her know at all that you do so.

"She means that you are under some circumstances that may render your lying in difficult to you, and that you are not willing to be exposed. I need say no more, but to tell you, that if you think fit to communicate so much of your case to me as is necessary, for I do not desire to pry into those things, I perhaps may be in a condition to assist you, and to make you easy, and remove all your dull thoughts upon that subject."

Every word this creature said was a cordial to me, and put new life and new spirit into my very heart; my blood began to circulate immediately, and I was quite another body; I ate my victuals again, and grew better presently after it. She said a great deal more to the same purpose, and then having pressed me to be free with her, and promised in the solemnest manner to be secret, she stopped a little, as if waiting to see what impression it made on me, and what I would say.

I was too sensible of the want I was in of such

a woman not to accept her offer; I told her my case was partly as she guessed, and partly not, for I was really married, and had a husband, though he was so remote at that time as that he could not appear publicly.

She took me short, and told me that was none of her business; all the ladies that came under her care were married women to her. "Every woman," says she, "that is with child has a father for it," and whether that father was a husband or no husband was no business of hers; her business was to assist me in my present circumstances, whether I had a husband or no; "for, madam," says she, "to have a husband that cannot appear is to have no husband, and therefore whether you are a wife or a mistress is all one to me."

I found presently, that whether I was a whore or a wife, I was to pass for a whore here, so I let that go. I told her it was true, as she said, but that, however, if I must tell her my case, I must tell it her as it was; so I related it as short as I could, and I concluded it to her. "I trouble you with this, madam," said I, "not that, as you said before, it is much to the purpose in your affair; but this is to the purpose, namely, that I am not in any pain about being seen, or being concealed, for 't is perfectly indifferent to me; but my difficulty is, that I have no acquaintance in this part of the nation."

"I understand you, madam," says she; "you have no security to bring to prevent the parish impertinences usual in such cases, and perhaps," says she, "do not know very well how to dispose of the child when it comes." "The last," says I, "is not so much my concern as the first." "Well, madam," answers the midwife, "dare you put yourself into my hands? I live in such a place; though I do not inquire after you, you may inquire after me. My name is B——; I live in such a street"—naming the street—"at the sign of the cradle. My profession is a midwife, and I have many ladies that come to my house to lie in. I have given security to the parish in general to secure them from any charge from what shall come into the world under my roof. I have but one question to ask in the whole affair, madam," says she, "and if that be answered, you shall be entirely easy of the rest."

I presently understood what she meant, and told her, "Madam, I believe I understand you. I thank God, though I want friends in this part of the world, I do not want money, so far as may be necessary, though I do not abound in that neither:" this I added, because I would not make her expect great things. "Well, madam," says she, "that is the thing, indeed, without which nothing can be done in these cases; and yet," says she, "you shall see that

I will not impose upon you, or offer anything that is unkind to you, and you shall know everything beforehand, that you may suit yourself to the occasion, and be either costly or sparing as you see fit."

I told her she seemed to be so perfectly sensible of my condition, that I had nothing to ask of her but this, that as I had money sufficient, but not a great quantity, she would order it so that I might be at as little superfluous charge as possible.

She replied, that she should bring in an account of the expenses of it in two or three shapes; I should choose as I pleased; and I desired her to do so.

The next day she brought it, and the copy of her three bills was as follows: —

	£	s.	d.
1. For three months' lodging in her house, including my diet, at 10s. a week . .	6	0	0
2. For a nurse for the month, and use of child-bed linen	1	10	0
3. For a minister to christen the child, and to the godfathers and clerk	1	10	0
4. For a supper at the christening if I had five friends at it	1	0	0
For her fees as a midwife, and the taking off the trouble of the parish	3	3	0
To her maidservant attending	0	10	0
	£13	13	0

This was the first bill; the second was in the same terms: —

	£	s.	d.
1. For three months' lodging and diet, &c., at 20s. per week	12	0	0
2. For a nurse for the month, and the use of linen and lace	2	10	0
3. For the minister to christen the child, &c., as above	2	0	0
4. For a supper, and for sweetmeats . . .	3	3	0
For her fees as above	5	5	0
For a servant-maid	1	0	0
	£25	18	0

This was the second-rate bill; the third, she said, was for a degree higher, and when the father or friends appeared: —

	£	s.	d.
1. For three months' lodging and diet, having two rooms and a garret for a servant .	30	0	0
2. For a nurse for the month, and the finest suit of child-bed linen	4	4	0
3. For the minister to christen the child, &c.,	2	10	0
4. For a supper, the gentlemen to send in the wine	6	0	0
For my fees, &c.	10	10	0
The maid, besides their own maid, only . .	0	10	0
	£53	14	0

I looked upon all the three bills, and smiled, and told her I did not see but that she was very reason-

able in her demands, all things considered, and I did not doubt but her accommodations were good.

She told me I should be a judge of that when I saw them. I told her I was sorry to tell her that I feared I must be her lowest-rated customer; "and perhaps, madam," said I, "you will make me the less welcome upon that account." "No, not at all," said she; "for where I have one of the third sort, I have two of the second and four of the first, and I get as much by them in proportion as by any; but if you doubt my care of you, I will allow any friend you have to see if you are well waited on or no."

Then she explained the particulars of her bill. "In the first place, madam," said she, "I would have you observe that here is three months keeping you at but 10s. a week; I undertake to say you will not complain of my table. I suppose," says she, "you do not live cheaper where you are now?" "No, indeed," said I, "nor so cheap, for I give 6s. per week for my chamber, and find my own diet, which costs me a great deal more."

"Then, madam," says she, "if the child should not live, as it sometimes happens, there is the minister's article saved; and if you have no friends to come, you may save the expense of a supper; so that take those articles out, madam," says she, "your lying in will not cost you above £5, 3s. more than your ordinary charge of living."

This was the most reasonable thing that I ever heard of; so I smiled, and told her I would come and be a customer; but I told her also, that as I had two months and more to go, I might perhaps be obliged to stay longer with her than three months, and desired to know if she would not be obliged to remove me before it was proper. No, she said; her house was large, and besides, she never put anybody to remove, that had lain in, till they were willing to go; and if she had more ladies offered, she was not so ill-beloved among her neighbours but she could provide accommodation for twenty, if there was occasion.

I found she was an eminent lady in her way, and, in short, I agreed to put myself into her hands. She then talked of other things, looked about into my accommodations where I was, found fault with my wanting attendance and conveniences, and that I should not be used so at her house. I told her I was shy of speaking, for the woman of the house looked stranger, or at least I thought so, since I had been ill, because I was with child; and I was afraid she would put some affront or other upon me, supposing that I had been able to give but a slight account of myself.

"O dear," says she, "her ladyship is no stranger to these things; she has tried to entertain ladies in your condition, but could not secure the parish; and besides, such a nice lady, as you take her to be.

However, since you are ageing, you shall not meddle with her, but I 'll see you are a little better looked after while you are here, and it shall not cost you the more neither."

I did not understand her; however, I thanked her, so we parted. The next morning she sent me a chicken roasted and hot, and a bottle of sherry, and ordered the maid to tell me that she was to wait on me every day as long as I stayed there.

This was surprisingly good and kind, and I accepted it very willingly. At night she sent to me again, to know if I wanted anything, and to order the maid to come to her in the morning for dinner. The maid had orders to make me some chocolate in the morning before she came away, and at noon she brought me the sweet-bread of a breast of veal, whole, and a dish of soup for my dinner; and after this manner she nursed me up at a distance, so that I was mightily well pleased, and quickly well, for indeed my dejections before were the principal part of my illness.

I expected, as is usually the case among such people, that the servant she sent me would have been some impudent brazen wench of Drury Lane breeding, and I was very uneasy upon that account; so I would not let her lie in the house the first night, but had my eyes about me as narrowly as if she had been a public thief.

My gentlewoman guessed presently what was the matter, and sent her back with a short note, that I might depend upon the honesty of her maid; that she would be answerable for her upon all accounts; and that she took no servants without very good security. I was then perfectly easy; and indeed the maid's behaviour spoke for itself, for a modester, quieter, soberer girl never came into anybody's family, and I found her so afterwards.

As soon as I was well enough to go abroad, I went with the maid to see the house, and to see the apartment I was to have; and everything was so handsome and so clean, that, in short, I had nothing to say, but was wonderfully pleased with what I had met with, which, considering the melancholy circumstances I was in, was beyond what I looked for.

It might be expected that I should give some account of the nature of the wicked practices of this woman, in whose hands I was now fallen; but it would be but too much encouragement to the vice, to let the world see what easy measures were here taken to rid the women's burthen of a child clandestinely gotten. This grave matron had several sorts of practice, and this was one, that if a child was born, though not in her house (for she had the occasion to be called to many private labours), she had people always ready, who for a piece of money would take the child off their hands, and off from

the hands of the parish too; and those children, as she said, were honestly taken care of. What should become of them all, considering so many, as by her account she was concerned with, I cannot conceive.

I had many times discourses upon that subject with her; but she was full of this argument, that she saved the life of many an innocent lamb, as she called them, which would perhaps have been murdered; and of many a woman, who, made desperate by the misfortune, would otherwise be tempted to destroy their children. I granted her that this was true, and a very commendable thing, provided the poor children fell into good hands afterwards, and were not abused and neglected by the nurses. She answered, that she always took care of that, and had no nurses in her business but what were very good people, and such as might be depended upon.

I could say nothing to the contrary, and so was obliged to say, "Madam, I do not question but you do your part, but what those people do is the main question;" and she stopped my mouth again with saying she took the utmost care about it.

The only thing I found in all her conversation on these subjects, that gave me any distaste, was, that one time in discoursing about my being so far gone with child, she said something that looked as if she could help me off with my burthen sooner, if I was willing; or in English, that she could give me some-

thing to make me miscarry, if I had a desire to put an end to my troubles that way; but I soon let her see that I abhorred the thoughts of it; and, to do her justice, she put it off so cleverly, that I could not say she really intended it, or whether she only mentioned the practice as a horrible thing; for she couched her words so well, and took my meaning so quickly, that she gave her negative before I could explain myself.

To bring this part into as narrow a compass as possible, I quitted my lodging at St. Jones's, and went to my new governess, for so they called her in the house, and there I was indeed treated with so much courtesy, so carefully looked to, and everything so well, that I was surprised at it, and could not at first see what advantage my governess made of it; but I found afterwards that she professed to make no profit of the lodgers' diet, nor indeed could she get much by it, but that her profit lay in the other articles of her management, and she made enough that way, I assure you; for 't is scarce credible what practice she had, as well abroad as at home, and yet all upon the private account, or, in plain English, the whoring account.

While I was in her house, which was near four months, she had no less than twelve ladies of pleasure brought to bed within doors, and I think she had two-and-thirty, or thereabouts, under her conduct

without doors; whereof one, as nice as she was with me, was lodged with my old landlady at St. Jones's.

This was a strange testimony of the growing vice of the age, and as bad as I had been myself, it shocked my very sense; I began to nauseate the place I was in, and, above all, the practice; and yet I must say that I never saw, or do I believe there was to be seen, the least indecency in the house the whole time I was there.

Not a man was ever seen to come upstairs, except to visit the lying-in-ladies within their month, nor then without the old lady with them, who made it a piece of the honour of her management that no man should touch a woman, no, not his own wife, within the month; nor would she permit any man to lie in the house upon any pretence whatever, no, not though it was with his own wife; and her saying for it was, that she cared not how many children were born in her house, but she would have none got there if she could help it.

It might perhaps be carried farther than was needful, but it was an error of the right hand if it was an error, for by this she kept up the reputation, such as it was, of her business, and obtained this character, that though she did take care of the women when they were debauched, yet she was not instrumental to their being debauched at all; and yet it was a wicked trade she drove too.

While I was here, and before I was brought to bed, I received a letter from my trustee at the bank, full of kind, obliging things, and earnestly pressing me to return to London; it was near a fortnight old when it came to me, because it had first been sent into Lancashire, and then returned to me. He concludes with telling me that he had obtained a decree against his wife, and that he would be ready to make good his engagement to me, if I would accept of him, adding a great many protestations of kindness and affection, such as he would have been far from offering if he had known the circumstances I had been in, and which, as it was, I had been very far from deserving.

I returned an answer to this letter, and dated it at Liverpool, but sent it by a messenger, alleging that it came in cover to a friend in town. I gave him joy of his deliverance, but raised some scruples at the lawfulness of his marrying again, and told him I supposed he would consider very seriously upon that point before he resolved on it, the consequence being too great for a man of his judgment to venture rashly upon; so concluded wishing him very well in whatever he resolved, without letting him into anything of my own mind, or giving any answer to his proposal of my coming to London to him, but mentioned at a distance my intention to return the latter end of the year, this being dated in April.

I was brought to bed about the middle of May, and had another brave boy, and myself in as good condition as usual on such occasions. My governess did her part as a midwife with the greatest art and dexterity imaginable, and far beyond all that ever I had had any experience of before.

Her care of me in my travail, and after in my lying in, was such, that if she had been my own mother it could not have been better. Let none be encouraged in their loose practices from this dexterous lady's management, for she has gone to her place, and I dare say has left nothing behind her that can or will come up to it.

I think I had been brought to bed about twenty days when I received another letter from my friend at the bank, with the surprising news that he had obtained a final sentence of divorce against his wife, and had served her with it on such a day, and that he had such an answer to give to all my scruples about his marrying again as I could not expect, and as he had no desire of; for that his wife, who had been under some remorse before for her usage of him, as soon as she heard that he had gained his point, had very unhappily destroyed herself that same evening.

He expressed himself very handsomely as to his being concerned at her disaster, but cleared himself of having any hand in it, and that he had only done himself justice in a case in which he was notoriously

injured and abused. However, he said that he was extremely afflicted at it, and had no view of any satisfaction left in this world, but only in the hope that I would come and relieve him by my company; and then he pressed me violently indeed to give him some hopes, that I would at least come up to town and let him see me, when he would further enter into discourse about it.

I was exceedingly surprised at the news, and began now seriously to reflect on my circumstances, and the inexpressible misfortune it was to have a child upon my hands; and what to do in it I knew not. At last I opened my case at a distance to my governess; I appeared melancholy for several days, and she lay at me continually to know what troubled me. I could not for my life tell her that I had an offer of marriage, after I had so often told her that I had a husband, so that I really knew not what to say to her. I owned I had something which very much troubled me, but at the same time told her I could not speak of it to any one alive.

She continued importuning me several days, but it was impossible, I told her, for me to commit the secret to anybody. This, instead of being an answer to her, increased her importunities; she urged her having been trusted with the greatest secrets of this nature, that it was her business to conceal everything, and that to discover things of that nature would be

her ruin. She asked me if ever I had found her tattling of other people's affairs, and how could I suspect her? She told me, to unfold myself to her was telling it to nobody; that she was silent as death; that it must be a very strange case indeed, that she could not help me out of; but to conceal it was to deprive myself of all possible help, or means of help, and to deprive her of the opportunity of serving me. In short, she had such a bewitching eloquence, and so great a power of persuasion, that there was no concealing anything from her.

So I resolved to unbosom myself to her. I told her the history of my Lancashire marriage, and how both of us had been disappointed; how we came together, and how we parted; how he discharged me, as far as lay in him, and gave me free liberty to marry again, protesting that if he knew it he would never claim me, or disturb or expose me; that I thought I was free, but was dreadfully afraid to venture, for fear of the consequences that might follow in case of a discovery.

Then I told her what a good offer I had; showed her my friend's letters, inviting me to London, and with what affection they were written, but blotted out the name, and also the story about the disaster of his wife, only that she was dead.

She fell a-laughing at my scruples about marrying, and told me the other was no marriage, but a

cheat on both sides; and that, as we were parted by mutual consent, the nature of the contract was destroyed, and the obligation was mutually discharged. She had arguments for this at the tip of her tongue; and, in short, reasoned me out of my reason; not but that it was too by the help of my own inclination.

But then came the great and main difficulty, and that was the child; this, she told me, must be removed, and that so as that it should never be possible for any one to discover it. I knew there was no marrying without concealing that I had had a child, for he would soon have discovered by the age of it that it was born, nay, and gotten too, since my parley with him, and that would have destroyed all the affair.

But it touched my heart so forcibly to think of parting entirely with the child, and, for aught I knew, of having it murdered, or starved by neglect and ill-usage, which was much the same, that I could not think of it without horror. I wish all those women who consent to the disposing their children out of the way, as it is called, for decency sake, would consider that 'tis only a contrived method for murder; that is to say, killing their children with safety.

It is manifest to all that understand anything of children, that we are born into the world helpless,

and uncapable either to supply our own wants or so much as make them known; and that without help we must perish; and this help requires not only an assisting hand, whether of the mother or somebody else, but there are two things necessary in that assisting hand, that is, care and skill; without both which, half the children that are born would die, nay, though they were not to be denied food, and one-half more of those that remained would be cripples or fools, lose their limbs, and perhaps their sense. I question not but that these are partly the reasons why affection was placed by nature in the hearts of mothers to their children; without which they would never be able to give themselves up, as 't is necessary they should, to the care and waking pains needful to the support of children.

Since this care is needful to the life of children, to neglect them is to murder them; again, to give them up to be managed by those people who have none of that needful affection placed by nature in them, is to neglect them in the highest degree; nay, in some it goes farther, and is in order to their being lost; so that 't is an intentional murder, whether the child lives or dies.

All those things represented themselves to my view, and that in the blackest and most frightful form; and as I was very free with my governess, whom I had now learned to call mother, I repre-

sented to her all the dark thoughts which I had about it, and told her what distress I was in. She seemed graver by much at this part than at the other; but as she was hardened in these things beyond all possibility of being touched with the religious part, and the scruples about the murder, so she was equally impenetrable in that part which related to affection. She asked me if she had not been careful and tender of me in my lying in, as if I had been her own child. I told her I owned she had. "Well, my dear," says she, "and when you are gone, what are you to me? And what would it be to me if you were to be hanged? Do you think there are not women who, as it is their trade, and they get their bread by it, value themselves upon their being as careful of children as their own mothers? Yes, yes, child," says she, "fear it not; how were we nursed ourselves? Are you sure you were nursed up by your own mother? and yet you look fat and fair, child," says the old beldam; and with that she stroked me over the face. "Never be concerned, child," says she, going on in her drolling way; "I have no murderers about me; I employ the best nurses that can be had, and have as few children miscarry under their hands as there would if they were all nursed by mothers; we want neither care nor skill."

She touched me to the quick when she asked if I

was sure that I was nursed by my own mother; on the contrary, I was sure I was not; and I trembled and looked pale at the very expression. Sure, said I to myself, this creature cannot be a witch, or have any conversation with a spirit, that can inform her what I was, before I was able to know it myself; and I looked at her as if I had been frighted; but reflecting that it could not be possible for her to know anything about me, that went off, and I began to be easy, but it was not presently.

She perceived the disorder I was in, but did not know the meaning of it; so she ran on in her wild talk upon the weakness of my supposing that children were murdered because they were not all nursed by the mother, and to persuade me that the children she disposed of were as well used as if the mothers had the nursing of them themselves.

"It may be true, mother," says I, "for aught I know, but my doubts are very strongly grounded." "Come, then," says she, "let's hear some of them." "Why, first," says I, "you give a piece of money to these people to take the child off the parent's hands, and to take care of it as long as it lives. Now we know, mother," said I, "that those are poor people, and their gain consists in being quit of the charge as soon as they can; how can I doubt but that, as it is best for them to have the child die, they are not over solicitous about its life?"

"This is all vapours and fancy," says she; "I tell you their credit depends upon the child's life, and they are as careful as any mother of you all."

"O mother," says I, "if I was but sure my little baby would be carefully looked to, and have justice done it, I should be happy; but it is impossible I can be satisfied in that point unless I saw it, and to see it would be ruin and destruction, as my case now stands; so what to do I know not."

"A fine story!" says the governess. "You would see the child, and you would not see the child; you would be concealed and discovered both together. These are things impossible, my dear, and so you must e'en do as other conscientious mothers have done before you, and be contented with things as they must be, though not as you wish them to be."

I understood what she meant by conscientious mothers; she would have said conscientious whores, but she was not willing to disoblige me, for really in this case I was not a whore, because legally married, the force of my former marriage excepted.

However, let me be what I would, I was not come up to that pitch of hardness common to the profession; I mean, to be unnatural, and regardless of the safety of my child; and I preserved this honest affection so long, that I was upon the point of giving up my friend at the bank, who lay so hard at me to

come to him, and marry him, that there was hardly any room to deny him.

At last my old governess came to me, with her usual assurance. "Come, my dear," says she, "I have found out a way how you shall be at a certainty that your child shall be used well, and yet the people that take care of it shall never know you."

"O mother," says I, "if you can do so, you will engage me to you for ever." "Well," says she, "are you willing to be at some small annual expense, more than what we usually give to the people we contract with?" "Ay," says I, "with all my heart, provided I may be concealed." "As to that," says she, "you shall be secure, for the nurse shall never dare to inquire about you; and you shall once or twice a year go with me and see your child, and see how 't is used, and be satisfied that it is in good hands, nobody knowing who you are."

"Why," said I, "do you think that when I come to see my child, I shall be able to conceal my being the mother of it? Do you think that possible?"

"Well," says she, "if you discover it, the nurse shall be never the wiser; she shall be forbid to take any notice. If she offers it, she shall lose the money which you are to be supposed to give her, and the child be taken from her too."

I was very well pleased with this. So the next week a countrywoman was brought from Hertford,

or thereabouts, who was to take the child off our hands entirely for £10 in money. But if I would allow £5 a year more to her, she would be obliged to bring the child to my governess's house as often as we desired, or we should come down and look at it, and see how well she used it.

The woman was a very wholesome-looked, likely woman, a cottager's wife, but she had very good clothes and linen, and everything well about her ; and with a heavy heart and many a tear, I let her have my child. I had been down at Hertford, and looked at her and at her dwelling, which I liked well enough ; and I promised her great things if she would be kind to the child, so she knew at first word that I was the child's mother. But she seemed to be so much out of the way, and to have no room to inquire after me, that I thought I was safe enough. So, in short, I consented to let her have the child, and I gave her £10 ; that is to say, I gave it to my governess, who gave it the poor woman before my face, she agreeing never to return the child to me, or to claim anything more for its keeping, or bringing up ; only that I promised, if she took a great deal of care of it, I would give her something more as often as I came to see it ; so that I was not bound to pay the £5, only that I promised my governess I would do it. And thus my great care was over, after a manner, which, though it did not at all satisfy my mind, yet was the

most convenient for me, as my affairs then stood, of any that could be thought of at that time.

I then began to write to my friend at the bank in a more kindly style, and particularly about the beginning of July I sent him a letter, that I purposed to be in town some time in August. He returned me an answer in the most passionate terms imaginable, and desired me to let him have timely notice, and he would come and meet me two days' journey. This puzzled me scurvily, and I did not know what answer to make to it. Once I was resolved to take the stage-coach to West Chester, on purpose only to have the satisfaction of coming back, that he might see me really come in the same coach; for I had a jealous thought, though I had no ground for it at all, lest he should think I was not really in the country.

I endeavoured to reason myself out of it, but it was in vain; the impression lay so strong on my mind, that it was not to be resisted. At last it came as an addition to my new design of going into the country, that it would be an excellent blind to my old governess, and would cover entirely all my other affairs, for she did not know in the least whether my new lover lived in London or in Lancashire; and when I told her my resolution, she was fully persuaded it was in Lancashire.

Having taken my measures for this journey, I let

her know it, and sent the maid that tended me from the beginning to take a place for me in the coach. She would have had me let the maid have waited on me down to the last stage, and come up again in the waggon, but I convinced her it would not be convenient. When I went away, she told me she would enter into no measures for correspondence, for she saw evidently that my affection to my child would cause me to write to her, and to visit her too, when I came to town again. I assured her it would, and so took my leave, well satisfied to have been freed from such a house, however good my accommodations there had been.

I took the place in the coach not to its full extent, but to a place called Stone, in Cheshire, where I not only had no manner of business, but not the least acquaintance with any person in the town. But I knew that with money in the pocket one is at home anywhere; so I lodged there two or three days, till, watching my opportunity, I found room in another stage-coach, and took passage back again for London, sending a letter to my gentleman that I should be such a certain day at Stony-Stratford, where the coachman told me he was to lodge.

It happened to be a chance coach that I had taken up, which, having been hired on purpose to carry some gentlemen to West Chester, who were going for Ireland, was now returning, and did not tie itself

up to exact times or places, as the stages did; so that, having been obliged to lie still on Sunday, he had time to get himself ready to come out, which otherwise he could not have done.

His warning was so short, that he could not reach Stony-Stratford time enough to be with me at night, but he met me at a place called Brickhill the next morning, just as we were coming into the town.

I confess I was very glad to see him, for I thought myself a little disappointed over-night. He pleased me doubly too by the figure he came in, for he brought a very handsome gentleman's coach and four horses, with a servant to attend him.

He took me out of the stage-coach immediately, which stopped at an inn in Brickhill; and putting into the same inn, he set up his own coach, and bespoke his dinner. I asked him what he meant by that, for I was for going forward with the journey. He said, No, I had need of a little rest upon the road, and that was a very good sort of a house, though it was but a little town; so we would go no farther that night, whatever came of it.

I did not press him much, for since he had come so far to meet me, and put himself to so much expense, it was but reasonable I should oblige him a little too; so I was easy as to that point.

After dinner we walked to see the town, to see the church, and to view the fields and the country,

as is usual for strangers to do; and our landlord was our guide in going to see the church. I observed my gentleman inquired pretty much about the parson, and I took the hint immediately, that he certainly would propose to be married; and it followed presently, that, in short, I would not refuse him; for, to be plain, with my circumstances I was in no condition now to say no; I had no reason now to run any more such hazards.

But while these thoughts ran round in my head, which was the work but of a few moments, I observed my landlord took him aside and whispered to him, though not very softly neither, for so much I overhead: "Sir, if you shall have occasion ——" the rest I could not hear, but it seems it was to this purpose: "Sir, if you shall have occasion for a minister, I have a friend a little way off that will serve you, and be as private as you please." My gentleman answered loud enough for me to hear, "Very well, I believe I shall."

I was no sooner come back to the inn, but he fell upon me with irresistible words, that since he had had the good fortune to meet me, and everything concurred, it would be hastening his felicity if I would put an end to the matter just there. "What do you mean?" says I, colouring a little. "What, in an inn, and on the road! Bless us all," said I, "how can you talk so?" "Oh, I can talk so very

well," says he; "I came on purpose to talk so, and I 'll show you that I did;" and with that he pulls out a great bundle of papers. "You fright me," said I; "what are all these?" "Don't be frighted, my dear," said he, and kissed me. This was the first time that he had been so free to call me my dear; then he repeated it, "Don't be frighted; you shall see what it is all;" then he laid them all abroad. There was first the deed or sentence of divorce from his wife, and the full evidence of her playing the whore; then there was the certificates of the minister and churchwardens of the parish where she lived, proving that she was buried, and intimating the manner of her death; the copy of the coroner's warrant for a jury to sit upon her, and the verdict of the jury, who brought it in *Non compos mentis*. All this was to give me satisfaction, though, by the way, I was not so scrupulous, had he known all, but that I might have taken him without it; however, I looked them all over as well as I could, and told him that this was all very clear indeed, but that he need not have brought them out with him, for it was time enough. Well, he said, it might be time enough for me, but no time but the present time was time enough for him.

There were other papers rolled up, and I asked him what they were. "Why, ay," says he, "that 's the question I wanted to have you ask me;" so he

takes out a little shagreen case, and gives me out of it a very fine diamond ring. I could not refuse it, if I had a mind to do so, for he put it upon my finger; so I only made him a curtsey. Then he takes out another ring: "And this," says he, "is for another occasion," and puts that into his pocket. "Well, but let me see it, though," says I, and smiled; "I guess what it is; I think you are mad." "I should have been mad if I had done less," says he; and still he did not show it me, and I had a great mind to see it; so says I, "Well, but let me see it." "Hold," says he; "first look here;" then he took up the roll again, and read it, and, behold! it was a licence for us to be married. "Why," says I, "are you distracted? You were fully satisfied, sure, that I would yield at first word, or resolved to take no denial." "The last is certainly the case," said he. "But you may be mistaken," said I. "No, no," says he, "I must not be denied, I can't be denied;" and with that he fell to kissing me so violently, I could not get rid of him.

There was a bed in the room, and we were walking to and again, eager in the discourse; at last, he takes me by surprise in his arms, and threw me on the bed, and himself with me, and holding me still fast in his arms, but without the least offer of any indecency, courted me to consent with such repeated entreaties and arguments, protesting his affection,

and vowing he would not let me go till I had promised him, that at last I said, "Why, you resolve not to be denied indeed, I think." "No, no," says he, "I must not be denied, I won't be denied, I can't be denied." "Well, well," said I, and giving him a slight kiss, "then you shan't be denied; let me get up."

He was so transported with my consent, and the kind manner of it, that I began to think once he took it for a marriage, and would not stay for the form; but I wronged him, for he took me by the hand, pulled me up again, and then giving me two or three kisses, thanked me for my kind yielding to him; and was so overcome with the satisfaction of it, that I saw tears stand in his eyes.

I turned from him, for it filled my eyes with tears too, and asked him leave to retire a little to my chamber. If I had a grain of true repentance for an abominable life of twenty-four years past, it was then. Oh, what a felicity is it to mankind, said I to myself, that they cannot see into the hearts of one another! How happy had it been if I had been wife to a man of so much honesty and so much affection from the beginning!

Then it occurred to me, "What an abominable creature am I! and how is this innocent gentleman going to be abused by me! How little does he think, that having divorced a whore, he is throwing

himself into the arms of another! that he is going to marry one that has lain with two brothers, and has had three children by her own brother! one that was born in Newgate, whose mother was a whore, and is now a transported thief! one that has lain with thirteen men, and has had a child since he saw me! Poor gentleman!" said I, "what is he going to do?" After this reproaching myself was over, it followed thus: "Well, if I must be his wife, if it please God to give me grace, I 'll be a true wife to him, and love him suitably to the strange excess of his passion for me; I will make him amends, by what he shall see, for the abuses I put upon him, which he does not see."

He was impatient for my coming out of my chamber, but finding me long, he went downstairs and talked with my landlord about the parson.

My landlord, an officious though well-meaning fellow, had sent away for the clergyman; and when my gentleman began to speak to him of sending for him, "Sir," says he to him, "my friend is in the house;" so without any more words he brought them together. When he came to the minister, he asked him if he would venture to marry a couple of strangers that were both willing. The parson said that Mr. —— had said something to him of it; that he hoped it was no clandestine business; that he seemed to be a grave gentleman, and he supposed madam was not

a girl, so that the consent of friends should be wanted. "To put you out of doubt of that," says my gentleman, "read this paper;" and out he pulls the licence. "I am satisfied," says the minister; "where is the lady?" "You shall see her presently," says my gentleman.

When he had said thus he comes upstairs, and I was by that time come out of my room; so he tells me the minister was below, and that upon showing him the licence, he was free to marry us with all his heart, "but he asks to see you;" so he asked if I would let him come up.

"'T is time enough," said I, "in the morning, is it not?" "Why," said he, "my dear, he seemed to scruple whether it was not some young girl stolen from her parents, and I assured him we were both of age to command our own consent; and that made him ask to see you." "Well," said I, "do as you please;" so up they brings the parson, and a merry, good sort of gentleman he was. He had been told, it seems, that we had met there by accident; that I came in a Chester coach, and my gentleman in his own coach to meet me; that we were to have met last night at Stony-Stratford, but that he could not reach so far. "Well, sir," says the parson, "every ill turn has some good in it. The disappointment, sir," says he to my gentleman, "was yours, and the good turn is mine, for if you had met at Stony-

Stratford I had not had the honour to marry you. Landlord, have you a Common Prayer Book?"

I started as if I had been frighted. "Sir," says I, "what do you mean? What, to marry in an inn, and at night too!" "Madam," says the minister, "if you will have it be in the church, you shall; but I assure you your marriage will be as firm here as in the church; we are not tied by the canons to marry nowhere but in the church; and as for the time of day, it does not at all weigh in this case; our princes are married in their chambers, and at eight or ten o'clock at night."

I was a great while before I could be persuaded, and pretended not to be willing at all to be married but in the church. But it was all grimace; so I seemed at last to be prevailed on, and my landlord, and his wife and daughter, were called up. My landlord was father and clerk and all together, and we were married, and very merry we were; though I confess the self-reproaches which I had upon me before lay close to me, and extorted every now and then a deep sigh from me, which my bridegroom took notice of, and endeavoured to encourage me, thinking, poor man, that I had some little hesitations at the step I had taken so hastily.

We enjoyed ourselves that evening completely, and yet all was kept so private in the inn that not a servant in the house knew of it, for my landlady and

her daughter waited on me, and would not let any of the maids come upstairs. My landlady's daughter I called my bridemaid: and sending for a shopkeeper the next morning, I gave the young woman a good suit of knots, as good as the town would afford, and finding it was a lacemaking town, I gave her mother a piece of bone-lace for a head.

One reason that my landlord was so close was, that he was unwilling that the minister of the parish should hear of it; but for all that somebody heard of it, so as that we had the bells set a-ringing the next morning early, and the music, such as the town would afford, under our window. But my landlord brazened it out, that we were married before we came thither, only that, being his former guests, we would have our wedding-supper at his house.

We could not find in our hearts to stir the next day; for, in short, having been disturbed by the bells in the morning, and having perhaps not slept overmuch before, we were so sleepy afterwards that we lay in bed till almost twelve o'clock.

I begged my landlady that we might have no more music in the town, nor ringings of bells, and she managed it so well that we were very quiet; but an odd passage interrupted all my mirth for a good while. The great room of the house looked into the street, and I had walked to the end of the room, and it being a pleasant, warm day, I had

opened the window, and was standing at it for some air, when I saw three gentlemen ride by, and go into an inn just against us.

It was not to be concealed, nor did it leave me any room to question it, but the second of the three was my Lancashire husband. I was frighted to death; I never was in such a consternation in my life; I thought I should have sunk into the ground; my blood ran chill in my veins, and I trembled as if I had been in a cold fit of an ague. I say, there was no room to question the truth of it; I knew his clothes, I knew his horse, and I knew his face.

The first reflection I made was, that my husband was not by to see my disorder, and that I was very glad of. The gentlemen had not been long in the house but they came to the window of their room, as is usual; but my window was shut, you may be sure. However, I could not keep from peeping at them, and there I saw him again, heard him call to one of the servants for something he wanted, and received all the terrifying confirmations of its being the same person that were possible to be had.

My next concern was, to know what was his business there; but that was impossible. Sometimes my imagination formed an idea of one frightful thing, sometimes of another; sometimes I thought he had discovered me, and was come to upbraid me with ingratitude and breach of honour; then I fancied

he was coming upstairs to insult me; and innumerable thoughts came into my head, of what was never in his head, nor ever could be, unless the devil had revealed it to him.

I remained in the fright near two hours, and scarce ever kept my eye from the window or door of the inn where they were. At last, hearing a great clutter in the passage of their inn, I ran to the window, and, to my great satisfaction, I saw them all three go out again and travel on westward. Had they gone towards London, I should have been still in a fright, lest I should meet him again, and that he should know me; but he went the contrary way, and so I was eased of that disorder.

We resolved to be going the next day, but about six o'clock at night we were alarmed with a great uproar in the street, and people riding as if they had been out of their wits; and what was it but a hue-and-cry after three highwaymen, that had robbed two coaches and some travellers near Dunstable Hill, and notice had, it seems, been given that they had been seen at Brickhill, at such a house, meaning the house where those gentlemen had been.

The house was immediately beset and searched, but there were witnesses enough that the gentlemen had been gone above three hours. The crowd having gathered about, we had the news presently; and I was heartily concerned now another way. I pres-

ently told the people of the house, that I durst say those were honest persons, for that I knew one of the gentlemen to be a very honest person, and of a good estate in Lancashire.

The constable who came with the hue-and-cry was immediately informed of this, and came over to me to be satisfied from my own mouth; and I assured him that I saw the three gentlemen as I was at the window; that I saw them afterwards at the windows of the room they dined in; that I saw them take horse, and I would assure him I knew one of them to be such a man, that he was a gentleman of a very good estate, and an undoubted character in Lancashire, from whence I was just now upon my journey.

The assurance with which I delivered this gave the mob gentry a check, and gave the constable such satisfaction, that he immediately sounded a retreat, told his people these were not the men, but that he had an account they were very honest gentlemen; and so they went all back again. What the truth of the matter was I knew not, but certain it was that the coaches were robbed at Dunstable Hill, and £560 in money taken; besides, some of the lace merchants that always travel that way had been visited too. As to the three gentlemen, that remains to be explained hereafter.

Well, this alarm stopped us another day, though

my spouse told me it was always safest travelling after a robbery, for that the thieves were sure to be gone far enough off when they had alarmed the country; but I was uneasy, and indeed principally lest my old acquaintance should be upon the road still, and should chance to see me.

I never lived four pleasanter days together in my life. I was a mere bride all this while, and my new spouse strove to make me easy in everything. O could this state of life have continued! how had all my past troubles been forgot, and my future sorrows been avoided! But I had a past life of a most wretched kind to account for, some of it in this world as well as in another.

We came away the fifth day; and my landlord, because he saw me uneasy, mounted himself, his son, and three honest country fellows with good fire-arms, and, without telling us of it, followed the coach, and would see us safe into Dunstable.

We could do no less than treat them very handsomely at Dunstable, which cost my spouse about ten or twelve shillings, and something he gave the men for their time too, but my landlord would take nothing for himself.

This was the most happy contrivance for me that could have fallen out; for had I come to London unmarried, I must either have come to him for the first night's entertainment, or have discovered to him

that I had not one acquaintance in the whole city of London, that could receive a poor bride for the first night's lodging with her spouse. But now I made no scruple of going directly home with him, and there I took possession at once of a house well furnished, and a husband in very good circumstances, so that I had a prospect of a very happy life, if I knew how to manage it; and I had leisure to consider of the real value of the life I was likely to live. How different it was to be from the loose part I had acted before, and how much happier a life of virtue and sobriety is, than that which we call a life of pleasure!

O had this particular scene of life lasted, or had I learnt from that time I enjoyed it, to have tasted the true sweetness of it, and had I not fallen into that poverty which is the sure bane of virtue, how happy had I been, not only here, but perhaps for ever! for while I lived thus, I was really a penitent for all my life past. I looked back on it with abhorrence, and might truly be said to hate myself for it. I often reflected how my lover at Bath, struck by the hand of God, repented and abandoned me, and refused to see me any more, though he loved me to an extreme; but I, prompted by that worst of devils, poverty, returned to the vile practice, and made the advantage of what they call a handsome face be the relief to my necessities, and beauty be a pimp to vice.

Now I seemed landed in a safe harbour, after the stormy voyage of life past was at an end, and I began to be thankful for my deliverance. I sat many an hour by myself, and wept over the remembrance of past follies, and the dreadful extravagances of a wicked life, and sometimes I flattered myself that I had sincerely repented.

But there are temptations which it is not in the power of human nature to resist, and few know what would be their case, if driven to the same exigencies. As covetousness is the root of all evil, so poverty is the worst of all snares. But I waive that discourse till I come to the experiment.

I lived with this husband in the utmost tranquillity; he was a quiet, sensible, sober man; virtuous, modest, sincere, and in his business diligent and just. His business was in a narrow compass, and his income sufficient to a plentiful way of living in the ordinary way. I do not say to keep an equipage, and make a figure, as the world calls it, nor did I expect it, or desire it; for as I abhorred the levity and extravagance of my former life, so I chose now to live retired, frugal, and within ourselves. I kept no company, made no visits; minded my family, and obliged my husband; and this kind of life became a pleasure to me.

We lived in an uninterrupted course of ease and content for five years, when a sudden blow from an

almost invisible hand blasted all my happiness, and turned me out into the world in a condition the reverse of all that had been before it.

My husband having trusted one of his fellow-clerks with a sum of money, too much for our fortunes to bear the loss of, the clerk failed, and the loss fell very heavy on my husband; yet it was not so great but that, if he had had courage to have looked his misfortunes in the face, his credit was so good that, as I told him, he would easily recover it; for to sink under trouble is to double the weight, and he that will die in it, shall die in it.

It was in vain to speak comfortably to him; the wound had sunk too deep; it was a stab that touched the vitals; he grew melancholy and disconsolate, and from thence lethargic and died. I foresaw the blow, and was extremely oppressed in my mind, for I saw evidently that if he died I was undone.

I had had two children by him, and no more, for it began to be time for me to leave bearing children, for I was now eight-and-forty, and I suppose if he had lived I should have had no more.

I was now left in a dismal and disconsolate case indeed, and in several things worse than ever. First, it was past the flourishing time with me, when I might expect to be courted for a mistress; that agreeable part had declined some time, and the ruins only appeared of what had been; and that which was worse

than all was this, that I was the most dejected, disconsolate creature alive. I that had encouraged my husband, and endeavoured to support his spirits under his trouble, could not support my own; I wanted that spirit in trouble which I told him was so necessary for bearing the burthen.

But my case was indeed deplorable, for I was left perfectly friendless and helpless, and the loss my husband had sustained had reduced his circumstances so low, that though indeed I was not in debt, yet I could easily foresee that what was left would not support me long; that it wasted daily for subsistence, so that it would be soon all spent, and then I saw nothing before me but the utmost distress; and this represented itself so lively to my thoughts, that it seemed as if it was come, before it was really very near; also my very apprehensions doubled the misery, for I fancied every sixpence that I paid for a loaf of bread was the last I had in the world, and that to-morrow I was to fast, and be starved to death.

In this distress I had no assistant, no friend to comfort or advise me; I sat and cried and tormented myself night and day, wringing my hands, and sometimes raving like a distracted woman; and indeed I have often wondered it had not affected my reason, for I had the vapours to such a degree, that my understanding was sometimes quite lost in fancies and imaginations.

I lived two years in this dismal condition, wasting that little I had, weeping continually over my dismal circumstances, and, as it were, only bleeding to death, without the least hope or prospect of help; and now I had cried so long, and so often, that tears were exhausted, and I began to be desperate, for I grew poor apace.

For a little relief, I had put off my house and took lodgings; and as I was reducing my living, so I sold off most of my goods, which put a little money in my pocket, and I lived near a year upon that, spending very sparingly, and ekeing things out to the utmost; but still when I looked before me, my heart would sink within me at the inevitable approach of misery and want. O let none read this part without seriously reflecting on the circumstances of a desolate state, and how they would grapple with want of friends and want of bread; it will certainly make them think not of sparing what they have only, but of looking up to heaven for support, and of the wise man's prayer, "Give me not poverty, lest I steal."

Let them remember that a time of distress is a time of dreadful temptation, and all the strength to resist is taken away; poverty presses, the soul is made desperate by distress, and what can be done? It was one evening, when being brought, as I may say, to the last gasp, I think I may truly say I was

distracted and raving, when prompted by I know not what spirit, and, as it were, doing I did not know what, or why, I dressed me (for I had still pretty good clothes), and went out. I am very sure I had no manner of design in my head when I went out; I neither knew or considered where to go, or on what business; but as the devil carried me out, and laid his bait for me, so he brought me, to be sure, to the place, for I knew not whither I was going, or what I did.

Wandering thus about, I knew not whither, I passed by an apothecary's shop in Leadenhall Street, where I saw lie on a stool just before the counter a little bundle wrapped in a white cloth; beyond it stood a maid-servant with her back to it, looking up towards the top of the shop, where the apothecary's apprentice, as I suppose, was standing upon the counter, with his back also to the door, and a candle in his hand, looking and reaching up to the upper shelf, for something he wanted, so that both were engaged, and nobody else in the shop.

This was the bait; and the devil who laid the snare prompted me, as if he had spoke, for I remember, and shall never forget it, 't was like a voice spoken over my shoulder, "Take the bundle; be quick; do it this moment." It was no sooner said but I stepped into the shop, and with my back to the wench, as if I had stood up for a cart that was

going by, I put my hand behind me and took the bundle, and went off with it, the maid or fellow not perceiving me, or any one else.

It is impossible to express the horror of my soul all the while I did it. When I went away I had no heart to run, or scarce to mend my pace. I crossed the street indeed, and went down the first turning I came to, and I think it was a street that went through into Fenchurch Street; from thence I crossed and turned through so many ways and turnings, that I could never tell which way it was, nor where I went; I felt not the ground I stepped on, and the farther I was out of danger, the faster I went, till, tired and out of breath, I was forced to sit down on a little bench at a door, and then found I was got into Thames Street, near Billingsgate. I rested me a little and went on; my blood was all in a fire; my heart beat as if I was in a sudden fright. In short, I was under such a surprise that I knew not whither I was agoing, or what to do.

After I had tired myself thus with walking a long way about, and so eagerly, I began to consider, and make home to my lodging, where I came about nine o'clock at night.

What the bundle was made up for, or on what occasion laid where I found it, I knew not, but when I came to open it, I found there was a suit of child-bed-linen in it, very good, and almost new, the lace

very fine; there was a silver porringer of a pint, a small silver mug, and six spoons, with some other linen, a good smock, and three silk handkerchiefs, and in the mug a paper, 18s. 6d. in money.

All the while I was opening these things I was under such dreadful impressions of fear, and in such terror of mind, though I was perfectly safe, that I cannot express the manner of it. I sat me down, and cried most vehemently. "Lord," said I, "what am I now? a thief! Why, I shall be taken next time, and be carried to Newgate, and be tried for my life!" And with that I cried again a long time, and I am sure, as poor as I was, if I had durst for fear, I would certainly have carried the things back again; but that went off after a while. Well, I went to bed for that night, but slept little; the horror of the fact was upon my mind, and I knew not what I said or did all night, and all the next day. Then I was impatient to hear some news of the loss; and would fain know how it was, whether they were a poor body's goods, or a rich. "Perhaps," said I, "it may be some poor widow like me, that had packed up these goods to go and sell them for a little bread for herself and a poor child, and are now starving and breaking their hearts for want of that little they would have fetched." And this thought tormented me worse than all the rest, for three or four days.

But my own distresses silenced all these reflections,

and the prospect of my own starving, which grew every day more frightful to me, hardened my heart by degrees. It was then particularly heavy upon my mind, that I had been reformed, and had, as I hoped, repented of all my past wickedness; that I had lived a sober, grave, retired life for several years, but now I should be driven by the dreadful necessity of my circumstances to the gates of destruction, soul and body; and two or three times I fell upon my knees, praying to God, as well as I could, for deliverance; but I cannot but say, my prayers had no hope in them. I knew not what to do; it was all fear without, and dark within; and I reflected on my past life as not repented of, that Heaven was now beginning to punish me, and would make me as miserable as I had been wicked.

Had I gone on here I had perhaps been a true penitent; but I had an evil counsellor within, and he was continually prompting me to relieve myself by the worst means; so one evening he tempted me again by the same wicked impulse that had said, "Take that bundle," to go out again and seek for what might happen.

I went out now by daylight, and wandered about I knew not whither, and in search of I knew not what, when the devil put a snare in my way of a dreadful nature indeed, and such a one as I have never had before or since. Going through Alders-

gate Street, there was a pretty little child had been at a dancing-school, and was agoing home all alone; and my prompter, like a true devil, set me upon this innocent creature. I talked to it, and it prattled to me again, and I took it by the hand and led it along till I came to a paved alley that goes into Bartholomew Close, and I led it in there. The child said, that was not its way home. I said, "Yes, my dear, it is; I'll show you the way home." The child had a little necklace on of gold beads, and I had my eye upon that, and in the dark of the alley I stooped, pretending to mend the child's clog that was loose, and took off her necklace, and the child never felt it, and so led the child on again. Here, I say, the devil put me upon killing the child in the dark alley, that it might not cry, but the very thought frighted me so that I was ready to drop down; but I turned the child about and bade it go back again, for that was not its way home; the child said, so she would; and I went through into Bartholomew Close, and then turned round to another passage that goes into Long Lane, so away into Charterhouse Yard, and out into St. John's Street; then crossing into Smithfield, went down Chick Lane, and into Field Lane, to Holborn Bridge, when, mixing with the crowd of people usually passing there, it was not possible to have been found out; and thus I made my second sally into the world.

The thoughts of this booty put out all the thoughts of the first, and the reflections I had made wore quickly off; poverty hardened my heart, and my own necessities made me regardless of anything. The last affair left no great concern upon me, for as I did the poor child no harm, I only thought I had given the parents a just reproof for their negligence, in leaving the poor lamb to come home by itself, and it would teach them to take more care another time.

This string of beads was worth about £12 or £14. I suppose it might have been formerly the mother's, for it was too big for the child's wear, but that, perhaps, the vanity of the mother to have her child look fine at the dancing-school, had made her let the child wear it; and no doubt the child had a maid sent to take care of it, but she, like a careless jade, was taken up perhaps with some fellow that had met her, and so the poor baby wandered till it fell into my hands.

However, I did the child no harm; I did not so much as fright it, for I had a great many tender thoughts about me yet, and did nothing but what, as I may say, mere necessity drove me to.

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